

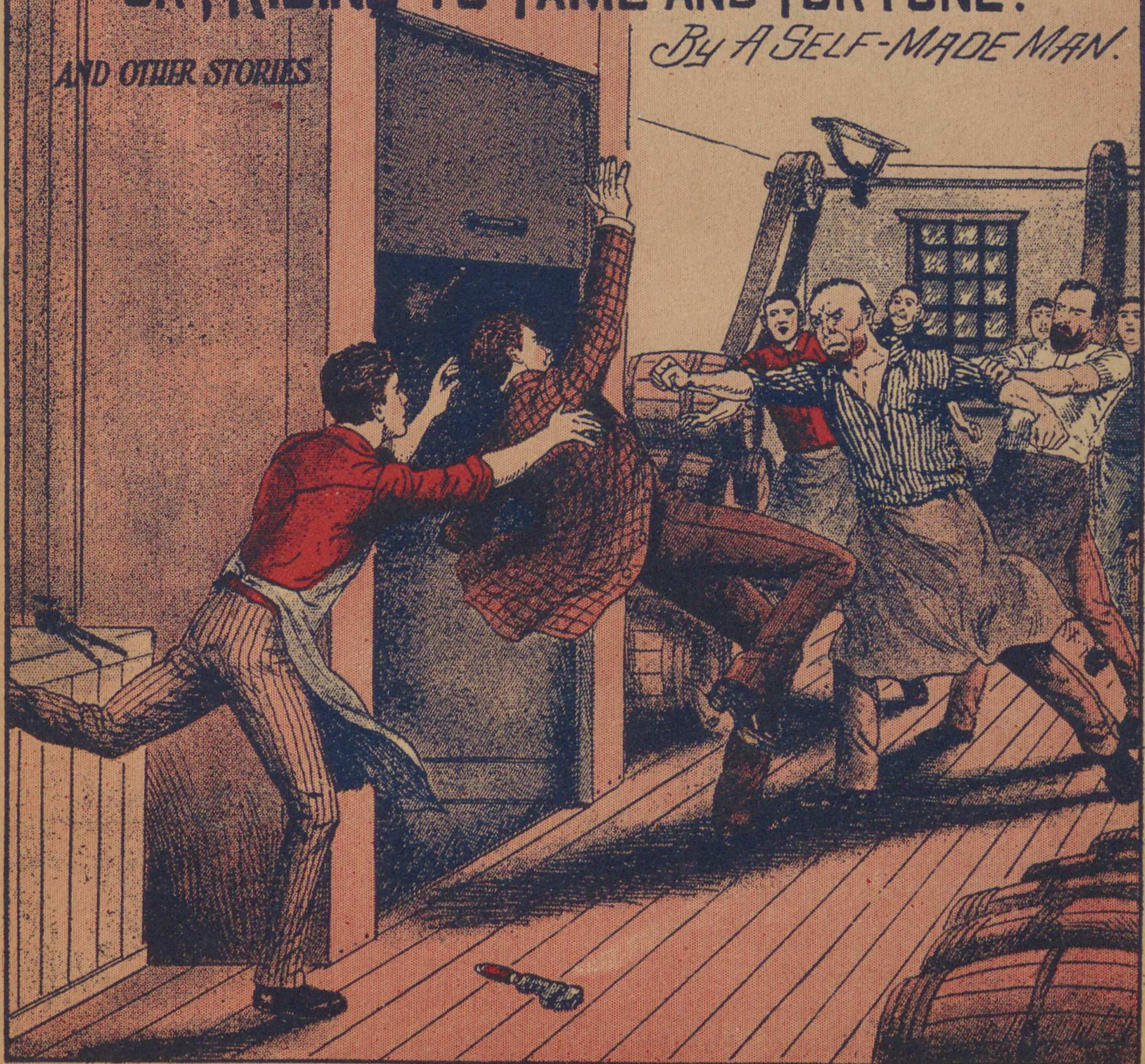
FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

**A YOUNG MECHANIC;
OR, RISING TO FAME AND FORTUNE.**

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



"What's that?" roared Vincent Staples, the foreman, springing at Crandall and dealing him a blow on the chest that sent him staggering toward the open elevator. Seeing the young man's peril, Joe ran forward and grabbed him just in time.

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$4.50 per year. Canada, \$4.50; Foreign, \$5.00. Westbury Publishing Co., Inc., Publishers, 168 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

No. 1094

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 17, 1926

Price 8 Cents.

A YOUNG MECHANIC

OR, RISING TO FAME AND FORTUNE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—How Joe Warner Got a Job and Aided Beauty in Distress.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Vincent Staples, foreman of the machine-shop connected with the Crandall Works, in the big, bustling town of Darien, curtly of a poorly dressed boy, with a bright face and an alert look, who had entered the room on the second floor of the tall brick building where Staples was boss of all he surveyed.

The air vibrated with the low swish of leather belting passing around numerous pulleys, together with the hum of the pulleys themselves; the buzz of many machines running at high speed, intermingled with the harsh grinding sound of metal against metal; the pounding of hammers; the rasping of files, and all the other nerve-tingling noises that go to make up a machine-shop in full operation. Half a dozen grimy-looking men, with their sleeves rolled up above their elbows, exposing brawny bare arms, were distributed about among the machines, while as many more, similarly attired, stood at intervals along a rude wooden bench facing a row of windows that admitted light and air to the room. All were working hard at various jobs that claimed their whole attention. Vincent Staples himself was the biggest and brawniest man of the lot, not unlike a human ox, with a great leather apron covering his broad expanse of body from his knees to his neck. He had been a blacksmith in his day, and looked the character yet.

"Can you give me a job?" asked the boy, with a respectful air.

"A job, eh?" ejaculated the foreman, taking in the applicant from head to foot with a critical glance.

"Yes, sir."

"Ever work in a machine shop?"

"No, sir."

"Humph! What brought you here, then?"

"I thought I'd like to learn the business. I'm handy with tools, in a way. It comes kind of natural to me. I've always been interested in machinery. I believe I'd make a good mechanic if I got a chance to learn the business."

"Oh, you do?" replied the foreman, with a quizzical stare.

"Yes, sir. I'd rather work in a machine shop than——"

"Than what?" asked the foreman sharply, as the boy paused.

"Go back to tending store."

"So you've been tending a store, have you? I don't see that a store boy is any use around here."

"If you'd give me a trial I'd——"

"I've got no time to monkey with new beginners," replied the foreman shortly.

"Then you won't give me a chance?"

"No. I've got no use——"

The sentence ended in a grunt, for the boy dashed suddenly forward and butted him in the stomach with considerable force, sending him staggering back a foot or two. At the same moment there was a swish through the air and something struck the wall near at hand with a dull thud. Vincent Staples quickly recovered his balance and with an angry snort made a rush at the boy, catching him by the arm.

"You little imp, what did you do that for?" he roared, raising his ponderous hand to administer a cuff that the lad would have remembered, had he caught it.

"Look there, sir," said the boy, pointing at a piece of steel still quivering in the wall where it had struck with force enough to imbed one end several inches into the plaster and lathes beyond. "That would have taken you in the head if I hadn't saved you the best I knew how."

The foreman looked at the bit of iron, measuring the height of its flight with his eye, then he swung around and saw the pale face of one of the men standing by an iron lathe. His quick glance saw the empty space between two parts of the machine where a few moments before a piece of steel had been revolving at lightning speed, and he comprehended at once what had happened. Then he released the boy's arm, and looked at him in a strange way.

"Boy," he said huskily, "you saved my life. I am grateful to you. Shake hands."

The young stranger accepted the grimy fist.

"What's your name, my lad?" said the foreman in a tone that was now distinctly friendly.

"Joe Warner."

"How old are you?"

"Nearly eighteen."

"Live with your parents, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I'm an orphan. I've been living with Moses Kline, the storekeeper, for whom I've been working, but as I've left his employ I've got to

take my things elsewhere today. I haven't got a place yet, but I thought I'd try to get a job before I hunted for a room, for I want to live as close to my new place as possible."

"I'll give you an opening in this shop and let you learn the business if you cotton to it," said the foreman.

"Thank you, sir."

"You needn't thank me. I owe you something for what you did for me, and you can count me as your friend from this out. I live a few blocks away and have a spare room which you may have for a nominal sum. It will soon be noon when we knock off for dinner. My daughter brings me a warm dinner in a pail. Wait down in the yard. I will meet you there and introduce you to my daughter. She will take you around to the house and make you acquainted with her mother. You can then see the room and if it suits you bring your things around in time for supper, and tomorrow morning I'll start you in here and see what I can make of you."

Vincent Staples shook the boy by the hand once more, and turned away. Joe Warner walked out of the machine room greatly pleased at having secured work where he could familiarize himself with the tools and machinery that appealed to his taste. He had never been contented at Moses Kline's store, where he had been obliged to work fourteen hours daily, with two hours additional on Saturday night, as well as three hours on Sunday morning, for \$3 per week and his keep. He had no idea what pay he would receive at the machine shop, but he didn't suppose it would be much at first. If he didn't get enough he would have to draw on his little fund of \$100 he had saved up during his term of service at Mr. Kline's store.

After leaving the machine shop, he walked down the narrow stairs to the yard, which was filled with tiers of barrels and piles of cases that were being loaded on trucks to be conveyed to the railroad station a few blocks away. To be out of the way, he perched himself on a lone box that stood against one of the fences, with his legs dangling in the air. Presently he saw a swell-looking young man issue from the back door of the office and look superciliously around the yard. He walked over to the men who were loading one of the trucks, and after watching them for a few moments, he commenced to find fault with one thing or another.

"I wonder who he is?" thought Joe. "Seems to be one of the bosses, from the way he acts."

At that moment a very pretty girl, between sixteen and seventeen years of age, came into the yard with a tin double-decker dinner pail in her hand.

"I guess that's the foreman's daughter," thought the boy. "She's a peach, all right."

The girl advanced into the yard, keeping near the fence on the side where Joe was roosted. The swell-looking chap noticed her, and crossed over to head her off. He came up with her by the time she was close to the boy. Joe then had a good look at both of them. The young man gave every evidence of being somewhat under the influence of liquor, though he walked steadily enough to deceive a casual observer.

"Good-day, Mss Staples," he said, planting himself before her. "Delighted to see you looking so

charming today. Fit enough to kiss, 'pon my word."

The girl drew back and looked disturbed.

"Brought your father's dinner, I see. I'll call a man and have him take it up to the machine shop, and then you'll do me the honor of going to lunch with me."

"Please let me pass, sir," said Miss Staples.

"Why, so coy? I've long desired the opportunity to express to you the sentiments that your beauty inspires in me. Surely you, a common workman's daughter, must appreciate the honor I would confer on you by taking you to lunch and the matinee afterward. I will give you a swell time, 'pon my honor, I will."

"I wish you would go away, Mr. Crandall," said the girl, backing toward the box on which Joe was seated.

"You refuse to go to lunch with me, then?"

"Certainly. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing," she replied, with some spirit.

"And you want me to leave you?"

"I wish you would."

"Then I will have to oblige you, I suppose; but you'll give me one kiss from those cherry lips of yours, won't you?"

He stepped forward, seized her by the arms, and tried to snatch a kiss. The girl screamed, and tried to release herself. He pulled her toward him, and would probably have succeeded in accomplishing his object but for Joe, who thought it high time to interfere in her behalf. After the second scream for help left her lips, the boy jumped off the box and struck Crandall a stinging blow in the face with the flat of his hand. As the young man released his hold on her, and turned upon his aggressor, Joe gave him a shove that landed him upon his back in the yard.

"Get over to the door, quick, Miss Staples," said Joe, motioning her to pass. "I'll see that he does not molest you further."

"Thank you," she said, with a grateful look, passing quickly by him just as the noon whistle blew for cessation of work.

Joe then faced the young dude who was trying to get on his feet, but with little success, for the shock had sent the fumes of the liquor into his head, and his efforts to rise were both futile and ludicrous.

CHAPTER II.—Joe Begins His Career as a Young Mechanic.

The men in the yard had naturally noticed the trouble, but not one of them made an effort to go to Crandall's assistance. The young gentleman was not popular in the establishment, and his downfall at the hands of a strange boy gave the eyewitnesses a whole lot of satisfaction. Crandall, whose other name was Arthur, was the nephew of the president of the company that owned the works. He held the lucrative job of secretary to the corporation, which was something of a sinecure, for he had little to do except attend the monthly meeting of the board and keep a record of its transactions.

He spent the major part of his time sporting around town with a fast set who had more money than brains, but when he visited the works he always tried to make his presence felt among the employees. On several occasions he had noticed

Kittie Staples bringing her father's dinner to him at the noon hour, and her fresh young beauty greatly impressed him. He believed that the girl would be highly flattered by any little attention he might condescend to favor her with, and with that idea in his head he made up to her. Seeing that Crandall was only making an exhibition of himself, Joe stepped forward and assisted him to rise.

The young man seemed to have no recollection that Joe was the cause of his mishap, the fumes of the high-balls confusing his brains entirely. He stood gazing vacantly around as the boy brushed him off, and when Joe offered his escort as far as the office, he accepted it with tipsy gravity, and offered the lad a quarter at the door, which Joe refused to accept. Mr. Staples was standing at the employees' entrance talking to his daughter, and he beckoned Joe up. Kittie had not told her father anything about Crandall's conduct, as she knew it would make him very angry, and might lead to trouble.

"Kittie, this is Joe Warner," said her father, when the boy came up.

Kittie smiled and blushed.

"Joe, this is my daughter, Kittie," the foreman added.

The boy bowed, and he and Kittie shook hands.

"You haven't told me your own name yet," said Joe to the foreman.

"Why, I thought I had. Well, it's Vincent Staples."

"Thank you, sir."

"Joe came up to the shop a little while ago, looking for a job," explained her father. "It happened while we were talking together that a piece of steel got loose in some way, from one of the machines and flew straight at my head. I would have been brained by it, I fear, but for Joe's prompt action. He shoved me back just in the nick of time, and the steel buried itself in the wall. Well, I'm going to take him on at the shop in the morning, and as he's looking for a room in this neighborhood, I invited him to take the small spare bedroom at our house. So take him over with you, and tell your mother to show it to him."

Kittie said she would, and somehow she was rather pleased to think that there was a probability of the good-looking boy, whom she had taken an instant fancy to, coming to live at their house. Mr. Staples turned away and carried his dinner pail upstairs to the shop, while Joe accompanied Kittie to her home.

"It was very kind of you to interfere in my behalf," the girl said, as they passed out at the gate, "and I am very, very grateful to you."

"You're welcome," replied the boy.

"It was funny that he didn't make a row with you about it afterward. Why, he said nothing at all, and actually permitted you to brush him off."

"Who is he, anyway?"

"His name is Arthur Crandall. He's the nephew of the president of the company that owns the works."

"Does he work in the office?"

"I believe not, but father told me that he is secretary of the company."

"He seems to be well fixed, for he is a swell chap."

"He lives with his uncle on Bradhurst Avenue."

Joe and Kittie felt almost like old friends when they reached the Staples' home. Kittie introduced

Joe to her mother, to whom she delivered her father's message. Joe was shown the small spare room, and he declared it suited him in every way. Mrs. Staples, who was a pleasant, motherly woman, invited Joe to take lunch with her and Kittie, and he accepted.

"I'll fetch my traps over some time this afternoon," he said. "I've got only a grip and a small trunk."

"The room will be ready for you whenever you come," replied Mrs. Staples.

About five o'clock Joe got an expressman to carry his belongings to the Staples' house for a quarter, and he went along himself without extra charge.

"We shall look upon you as one of the family," said Mrs. Staples, as he started to go to his room, "so you must make yourself at home."

He found Joe in the dining-room, reading an evening paper. Supper was soon on the table, and all sat up.

"You must eat hearty, Joe," said Vincent Staples. "It is against my principles to have anybody go hungry in this house."

"Thank you, sir. I will endeavor to hold my end up," laughed the boy.

Next morning Joe went to the works with the foreman and began his career as a young mechanic.

CHAPTER III.—The Model That Wouldn't Work the Right Way.

After that Kittie brought two dinner pails to the works at noon, one of which was intended for Joe.

"I don't think you ought to burden yourself with an extra pail for me, Kittie," he said, when she appeared the first day he was on the job. "I can easily get a light lunch at a cheap restaurant around here."

"Oh, it's no trouble for me to do so. I can bring two just as well as one, Joe," she replied, with a smile.

"Well, it's very kind of you and your mother to go to so much trouble on my account. If I can only find some way to return it I shall be happy."

"Don't worry about it. Take the good things that come your way and say nothing. That's the way I do."

Her words put an idea in his head. A few evenings later he invited her to go out for a walk. She readily agreed to go, and her parents offered no objection, for they thought Joe an uncommonly nice boy, and felt that their only daughter was perfectly safe in his society. Joe took Kittie into a jewelry store and asked her to pick out some little thing that she thought would please her mother, and which it would be proper for him to present her with. This Kittie did.

"Now," said Joe, "I think that locket would just suit you to wear about your neck, so I'm going to buy it for you."

"Oh, I'm not going to let you spend your money on me," she said, with a shake of her shapely head.

"Oh, come now, the other day, if you remember, you told me to take the good things that came my way and say nothing, for that was what you did. Well, now I want to see you make good. If you refuse to accept that locket I will understand that

it is because you don't care to take anything from me, which would make me feel badly. You ought to have some little reward for bringing me my dinner at noon. This is the only way I can show my appreciation of your kindness, so it isn't fair for you to turn my good intentions down."

"Well, I'll take it this once, seeing that you insist," she said, with a coquettish smile; "but never again, remember."

"Until the next time," he chuckled.

Mrs. Staples was very much pleased with her present, and thanked the boy for it, though she could not help chiding him just a little bit for spending his money on her. Kittie showed her parents her new locket, and they said it was very pretty. Her father chaffed her a little over it when Joe was not present, and the girl fled from the room with a face as red as a full-blown rose of the same color. Three months passed away and Joe Warner had not only proved himself a willing and useful assistant in the machine shop, but he was beginning to show signs of considerable talent.

One day Joe, while poking around the shop during the noon hour, after he had disposed of his dinner, found a working model of a horizontal engine with driving rod, fly-wheel, steam chests complete, and a new kind of steam condenser. Some man who had worked there months before had designed the apparatus and put it together, but the machine had failed to pan out in one very important feature that he was unable to rectify, so he had abandoned the working model, and it had stood for a long time in a corner of the shop accumulating rust and dirt. Joe pulled the thing out and looked at it with much interest. He asked one of the men what it was, and was told what it had been built for.

"Parks couldn't get his new-fangled condenser to work," said the man.

"Why not?" asked the boy.

"Give it up. He tinkered at it every day during the noon hour for a long time, and finally gave it up in disgust. When he went away he left the model here."

"It's a wonder he did not take it with him. He might have found the solution of the difficulty some time."

"Possibly, had he lived, he might."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes; poor chap. He was run down by a freight train soon after he went to another shop, and that wound him up."

"I wonder if I could have the model?"

"What could you make out of it?" asked the man curiously.

"I don't know that I could make anything out of it, but I'd like to look it over and study it."

"Oh, I see what you're aiming at," said the man. "It won't do any harm for you to use it as a kind of object lesson, and may do you a whole lot of good. Just you tell Mr. Staples why you want it and he'll let you have it, for I notice he is trying to push you ahead as much as possible."

So Joe asked the foreman if he could have the model.

"Certainly you may have it," replied Mr. Staples. "What are you going to do with it? Clean it up and use it to study up the principles of the steam engine?"

"That was about my idea," answered Joe. "Hopkins told me that a man named Parks put

it together as a working model to demonstrate some improvement in the condenser."

"That's right. Parks was a clever fellow, but his scheme was not practicable. The modern condenser, of which there are two types in general use—the surface condenser and the jet condenser—is about as perfect as human ingenuity can make it."

"What did Parks expect to accomplish, that is not already done?"

"His idea was to make an absolute vacuum in the condenser."

"I suppose you mean by that, keeping the air out altogether," Joe said, because he knew that a vacuum is said to be produced when air is more or less completely removed from the interior of a closed vessel.

"That's about the size of it," nodded the foreman, as he relighted his pipe.

"Is it impossible to make an absolute vacuum in a condenser?"

"I believe it is."

"Then why did Parks waste his time trying to do the impossible?"

"Don't you know that when some people of an inventive turn of mind get a certain idea into their head, which nine people out of ten can see is impracticable, it is almost out of the question to convince them that they are wrong?"

"Is that the way it was with Parks?"

"Yes. Steam is condensed by cold water. In the surface condenser the exhaust steam comes in contact with a large area of metallic surface, which is kept cool by contact with cold water. In the jet condenser the exhaust on entering the chamber comes in contact with a jet of cold water. In either case the entering steam is condensed to cold water, and in consequence a partial vacuum is found. Understand?"

Joe nodded.

"Now, if a sufficient amount of cold water was used, the steam on entering would instantly condense, and a practically perfect vacuum would be obtained were it not for the fact that the feed water of the boiler always contains a small quantity of air, which passes with the exhaust steam into the condenser, and therefore partially destroys the vacuum. To get rid of this air the condenser is fitted with an air pump. Parks' idea was to get rid of the air without the aid of an air pump. He claimed that if he could do that he could make both fame and fortune. He didn't succeed, though several times he said he had hit it."

At that moment the whistle blew and work was resumed in the shop.

CHAPTER IV.—Trouble in the Shop.

It took the odd moments of Joe's own time for a week to clean up the model, but he worked with great industry at the job and finally had the thing in the shape it was when the maker abandoned it. A steam pipe with a cock in it ran up one corner of the room. Parks had tapped it and inserted the cock in order to get live steam to experiment with in his model. A thick rubber tube formed the connection between the cock and a smaller cock on the little engine. Joe found the tube imbedded in the dust, and Mr. Staples explained the use it had been put to. One day when

the boy had the engine in perfect condition, he attached the tube to both the model and the cock in the steam pipe, and turned a little live steam on.

The engine began to work away at once. The steam that entered the condenser escaped through an opening in the top, for it didn't condense, the cold water contact being missing. Joe didn't mind that, since all that he was really interested in at that moment was the working of the miniature engine. It was admirably constructed, being perfect in every detail, and it operated with a smoothness that delighted the boy. As the model stood on a shelf out of anyone's way, it wasn't necessary to move it when the whistle blew. Joe, however, took the precaution to remove the tube connection and hide it for fear that one of the boys in the building might get on to it some time when he was not there, and by turning on too great a volume of steam, damage the model, which he wouldn't be able to repair owing to his lack of mechanical knowledge. For some time Joe amused himself during the noon hour with his working engine, studying its rhythmic movements and pondering over the ingenuity of man which had produced such a wonderful bit of mechanism.

"Go down in the engine room, Joe, and look at the condenser there," the foreman told him. "Have a talk with the engineer. He'll be able to tell you more in five minutes than I could in a month."

So for a week Joe haunted the engine room and questioned the engineer about the construction and working of the jet condenser attached to the big engine. He learned a whole lot in that time, but he was too ignorant yet of mechanics to turn this information to any practical account. However, his conversations with the engineer greatly interested him in the stationary engine, and he began taking books on the subjects from the Mechanics' Library of the town, and reading them up. Thus six months passed away, during which Joe made great progress as a young mechanic, and was considered by all hands as an almost indispensable adjunct of the shop. He often saw Arthur Crandall around the premises, but he never came into the machine room, probably because he considered the place too dirty. One afternoon Crandall surprised the mechanics of the machine shop by stepping off the elevator into the room. Joe was working at a bench near the elevator door and saw him first.

"I wonder what brings him in here?" the boy muttered. "By George! He's loaded, too. Probably that accounts for it."

Crandall walked unsteadily about the unoccupied space near the elevator, then stopped and looked around the room. Mr. Staples came up to him and asked what he wanted.

"You're Vincent Staples, aren't you?" said the secretary of the company.

"Yes, that's my name. What can I do for you?"

"I want to talk with you. Come outside somewhere."

"You can talk with me here, can't you?" replied the foreman.

"How would you like to have a raise in your wages?" said Crandall, with a feeble kind of grin.

"A raise in my wages!" exclaimed the astonished man.

"That's what I said. I can fix it so you can get it."

"I don't quite understand what you are trying to get at," said Staples, who was puzzled to account for such an offer, except it was due to the fact that the young man was not strictly in his right senses.

"Staples," continued Crandall, "you're a fine mechanic. Understand? A fine mechanic. The best we have. And you have a fine-looking daughter, too."

"Just leave my daughter out of your conversation, Mr. Crandall, and tell me just what brought you in here," said Staples in a slightly huffy tone.

"I couldn't leave your daughter out, for I came to talk about her. Understand? I've met her several times, but I find her rather coy. Thinks I'm too tony for her, I guess. Now I want you to put in a good word for me with her. Let her know that I would only be too delighted to escort her around to places of amusement and treat her to dinner afterward. My automobile will be always at her service with or without myself. Understand? Any day she'd like to take an outing in the suburbs let me know, Staples. Drop a note in the office addressed to me, and I'll send my chauffeur with the machine around to your house."

As Crandall proceeded the foreman waxed hot under the collar. He deeply resented the familiar way that young Crandall talked about the girl, and he was about to cut the dude off short when Crandall said:

"You fix it so I can take her out tomorrow afternoon, Staples, and I'll see that you get \$5 a week more in your pay envelope."

"What's that?" roared Vincent Staples, the foreman, springing at Crandall and dealing him a blow on the chest that sent him staggering toward the open elevator.

Seeing the young man's peril, Joe ran forward and grabbed him just in time.

CHAPTER V.—The Projected Abduction.

The foreman's angry exclamation, and the blow that followed it, drew the attention of every man in the shop to the point where the disturbance was taking place. They saw the ponderous Staples glaring at the secretary of the company as Joe dragged him away from the edge of the elevator shaft. At that moment the elevator came down and paused at the floor for a machinist to get off. Staples immediately seized the disconcerted Crandall by the arm, bundled him aboard the elevator, and told the man to take him downstairs to the office. Joe was as much in the dark as anyone else as to the cause of the foreman's attack on Crandall.

"The only way I can account for it is that the dude must have said something to Mr. Staples that he wouldn't stand for. I can't imagine what it could be, though, for the foreman couldn't help seeing that Crandall was pretty tipsy, and consequently not fully responsible for what he said."

When the shop closed for the day, and Joe started for home with the foreman, as was his custom, he learned from Mr. Staples' lips the true cause of the brief scrap.

"Does he imagine because I'm an employee of the company that he has a right to pay his unwelcome attentions to my daughter?" growled Mr. Staples, after he had explained matters to Joe.

"He was half shot. He didn't realize what he was saying," replied Joe.

"Whether he did or not, it was in his mind, and the liquor brought it out. I suppose he's seen Kittie bring our dinners around. She never told me that Crandall noticed her in any way."

"Gee!" thought the boy. "If Mr. Staples knew that the dude tried to kiss Kittie the day I caught on to the job in the shop, and that he would have succeeded only that I interfered, I'm afraid there would be something more doing in the secretary's way."

Joe, on the score of prudence, did not volunteer any information on the subject. When they reached the house Mr. Staples opened up the subject with his daughter at once. He wanted to know to what extent Crandall had ever noticed her, and whether she had given him the least encouragement. Kittie admitted that the young man had spoken to her several times, but that she had turned down his advances every time in a way that ought to have convinced him that she wanted nothing to do with him. Mr. Staples did not tell his daughter what occurred in the shop that afternoon, but he told his wife later on, and she told Kittie next day, though Joe gave her an inkling of the truth that evening.

It was decided that the girl was not to come to the works any more, and thereafter Joe and the foreman carried their dinner pails with them in the morning like the other men who did not frequent a restaurant. Staples expected to be called down to the office to give an explanation to the head of the establishment for his attack on his nephew, but nothing like that happened, and matters went on as before the dude's visit. Crandall himself, however, had a perfect recollection of the incident, though he did not mention the matter to his uncle, because he did not care to face an explanation of the affair. He determined to get square with the foreman just the same, and in a way that would enable him to kill two birds with one stone.

He took counsel with a couple of boon companions, who were as unscrupulous as himself, and they readily agreed to help him out. All three believed that their money and social positions would protect them if trouble cropped out of it. Their plan was to kidnap Kittie Staples just to scare her father, and have her held a prisoner at a certain roadhouse a few miles outside of Darien. This house was kept by an ex-pugilist, and was frequented by the fashionable young men of the town. Before the kidnapping scheme could be carried into effect it was necessary to enlist the proprietor of the roadhouse in the enterprise. As considerable risk would attach to it, there was no doubt that the man would insist on being well paid.

Accordingly, Crandall and his cronies visited the roadhouse and had a talk with the former prizefighter, whose name was Gid Hathaway. Hathaway didn't fancy being mixed up in the scheme, but he couldn't afford to turn down such an important and profitable personage as Arthur Crandall. The young dude had influence enough to spoil business at the roadhouse if he chose to exercise it, so an arrangement was finally made for the reception of Kittie Staples, and her sequestration at the top of the house. The best-laid schemes of mice and men, according to a famous poet, oft go astray. And so it was in this in-

stance. It was necessary for the success of the enterprise, that the girl should be decoyed from her home after dark. One evening, just after dark, a small boy pulled the bell at the Staples' house, and when Kittie answered the ring the boy said he had brought a note for Miss Kittie Staples.

"That's my name," she said promptly. "Give it to me. Who sent you?"

"Hattie Forrest. She said I was to bring back an answer."

"Wait a minute till I read it."

Kittie ran into the sitting-room, where her father was reading the evening paper, tore open the note, and read the following:

"Dear Kittie: Come around to the house tonight, as I want to see you on important business. Excuse handwriting, as I burned my right hand at the stove a while ago and I can hardly hold my pen. Don't fail to come, as you will miss something if you do not. Let the bearer of this know whether you are coming or not, and when.

"Yours, as ever, HATTIE."

There was something strange about the note, besides the handwriting, which did not look like Hattie's, but then the writer had explained that she had crippled her hand at the stove and could hardly write. The tone of the note did not sound like Hattie, still it was quite possible that Miss Forrest had dashed it off in a hurry and at hazard. At any rate there was no reason why Kittie should suspect the genuineness of the note, so she ran back to the door and told the boy she would be over to Hattie's house in half an hour.

As soon as the boy got this reply he hurried off. Joe had gone out a few minutes before to visit a friend of his, who lived near Hattie Forrest, leaving word that he would be back by half past nine. Kittie told her mother that she had received a note from her friend Hattie, asking her to come around that evening and she told her mother to be sure and tell Joe to come after her. Then she went upstairs to change her gown and fix up a bit. In the meantime Joe had gone on to his friend's house. When he arrived at his destination he found, much to his disappointment, that his friend had gone out for the evening, so there was nothing for him to do but to return home again.

As he was in the act of opening the gate in the hedge which cut his friend's home off from the street, an automobile dashed up and stopped in front of the house. Three young men sprang out, and Joe, thinking they were visitors to the house he had just left, drew back to let them enter. After looking up and down the quiet, shady street, they stepped up alongside of the hedge within a couple of feet of the spot where Joe stood in the gloom.

"The boy ought to be up this way with an answer in a few minutes," said one of them, taking a box of cigarettes from his pocket and offering it to each of his companions, "then we'll know whether Miss Staples is coming or not."

Joe gave a start of surprise when he heard Kittie's name mentioned, and he began to wonder who these chaps were and what was in the wind. The flash of a match lit up the faces of the three for a moment or two as each lighted his cigarette, and

to Joe's astonishment he recognized one of the young men as Arthur Crandall.

CHAPTER VI.—The Young Mechanic to the Rescue.

"Suppose the girl brings an escort with her—that young mechanic, for instance, who is boarding at her house—that is liable to lead to a complication," said one of the young men.

"Oh, I guess we can handle him, too," replied Crandall carelessly. "If he's with her we'll give him a tap on the head first, and while one of us is attending to him, the other two can throw the shawl over Miss Staple's head and hustle her into the machine. The moment we're off, we'll be safe."

"You've notified Hathaway that he may look for us to bring the girl to his place tonight?" said the third young man.

"I've attended to that," replied Crandall, flipping the ashes from the end of his cigarette.

"Staples is sure to notify the police when his daughter doesn't return home at the usual time and he finds that she hasn't been at Miss Forrest's."

"What do we care?" asked Crandall. "Nobody will suspect us of carrying the girl off, and the roadhouse will be the last place they'll think of in connection with her."

"Here comes the boy now," said one of the others.

"Go and meet him, Brett," said Crandall. "You hired him to deliver the note, and there is no need for him to see us."

The person addressed as Brett immediately went forward and met the boy several yards away. Joe, standing in the shadow of the hedge, had been almost paralyzed with astonishment at the revelation he had been listening to.

"The roadhouse they expect to take her to must be Hathaway's place," muttered Joe. "That's the only roadhouse I know of anywhere around. It's a sporting place, where I've heard they have glove fights once in a while. All the town dudes flock there to have a good time. What a nerve Crandall has to go into a trick of this kind. He's supposed to be a gentleman, too. I suppose his object is to give Kittie a scare. Wants to get back at her because she won't accept his attentions. Or, maybe this is the way he's trying to revenge himself on her father for the blow he got in the shop. It's a foolish piece of business, anyhow, and he's bound to get in trouble over it. However, it's up to me to put a spoke in his little game. Mighty lucky thing that I've got on to it, for Kittie would get the fright of her life if those chaps succeeded in running off with her."

Brett now returned to Crandall and his companion.

"Miss Staples has swallowed the bait and will be along this way in half an hour," he said. "She'll have to come alone, for the kid told me that he met the mechanic, Joe Warner, going somewhere."

"Good," replied Crandall, lighting a fresh cigarette. "We'll have things all our way. Go and get the shawl out of the machine, Otis, so we'll be all ready to grab her suddenly when she passes."

Otis obeyed instructions.

"How long do you expect to keep the girl at Hathaway's?" asked Brett.

"A week or two. Long enough to break her old man up, and make him think she's disappeared for good. He's got to pay up for that blow he gave me. I'd have had him fired from the shop if I could have seen my way clear to do it."

"Why couldn't you? Aren't you secretary of the works?"

"Of course I am, but that doesn't give me authority over the hands," replied Crandall. "The superintendent runs the works, and he takes his orders from my uncle. Staples is a good hand, and he wouldn't be discharged just to oblige me."

While they were talking, Joe was figuring how he could block the scheme at the critical moment.

"I wish my friend Taylor was here," he thought, meaning the boy who lived in the house behind him, "I'll bet the two of us would make it pretty interesting for these dudes."

As his friend Taylor wasn't there he had to depend entirely on himself. So he waited with some impatience for the crisis of the affair.

"Here she comes," said Brett presently. "Get ready for business."

Unsuspecting of what was ahead of her, Kittie Staples came tripping up the street. She saw the automobile drawn up alongside the curb, but paid no attention to it. As she drew nearer she made out the three young men standing close to the hedge, apparently engaged in conversation. She did not dream they were waiting there for her. Joe couldn't see her from the spot where he stood, owing to the top of the hedge which obstructed his view. He held the gate open an inch or two in readiness to fling back and rush out.

"You speak to her, Brett," said Crandall, "and when she stops and turns I'll fling the shawl over her head, and then we'll both grab her and force her into the machine. I guess you'd better get on the front seat, Otis, and be in readiness to start off the moment I give the word."

"All right," said Otis, crossing and getting into the auto.

In another moment or two Kittie Staples was abreast of the conspirators, and then Brett stepped up to her, raising his hat politely.

"I beg your pardon, miss, can you tell me where——"

Kittie stopped and looked at the well-dressed young fellow as he spoke. The moment she turned her back toward the hedge, Crandall shook out the folds of the shawl and dashed at her. Joe, who was watching him closely, sprang out through the gateway, and just as the shawl fell over the girl's head the young mechanic struck Crandall a heavy blow under the ear that sent him staggering over toward the auto, dragging the shawl with him.

"Run, Kittie, run!" cried Joe, to the frightened and astonished girl as he aimed an uppercut at Brett's jaw.

The young fellow, taken by surprise, failed to dodge in time, and Joe's fist made his teeth rattle like a pair of castanets. Joe gave him no time to recover, but smashed him in the eye with his left, following that up with a crack in the nose with his right. Brett, staggered by the assault, jumped into the auto to escape further punishment, and Joe once more turned his attention to Crandall.

"Who in thunder are you?" demanded Crandall, as Joe rushed at him.

"Find out," replied the boy, striking out at the dude.

Crandall parried the blow and called on his companions for help. Otis, who had been thunderstruck at Joe's sudden appearance and whirlwind attack on his companions, jumped out of the auto when he saw that their assailant was alone, and he was only a boy. Brett also recovered his nerve again, though his face was badly damaged, and he responded to Crandall's call. Kittie, perceiving that the young mechanic in whom she took so much interest, was in serious danger of being knocked out by the three young men, uttered a shrill scream for help, which echoed up and down the street on the still night air.

"Confound it!" roared Crandall. "The game is up and all on account of this chap. Tackle him low down, Brett, and then we'll finish him."

Brett, who had been a good football player at his college, flung his arms around Joe's thighs and slipped his hold to his knees. The other two closed in on him at the same moment and the boy was bowled over on his back. His head struck upon the stone pavement and he was rendered unconscious. Kittie continued to scream for help, and people in the immediate neighborhood threw up their windows to ascertain what the trouble was. A man came out from one of the nearby houses and started for the scene of the trouble. Brett saw him coming.

"We've got to skip, and skip quick," he said hurriedly.

"Throw this chap into the machine and we'll be off," replied Crandall, grabbing Joe by the head and shoulders.

"What the dickens do you want to monkey with him for? Let him lie there," said Brett impatiently.

"No," answered Crandall doggedly, "this fellow spoiled our game and gave me a crack under the ear that I feel yet. Bundle him in and we'll carry him out into the woods where we can get square with him at our leisure."

As there was no time to argue with Crandall, and he seemed determined to have his way, Brett reluctantly helped carry the young mechanic to the auto and dump him in between the two seats. Otis was already seated in the chauffeur's place, and the moment Brett climbed in alongside of him he started the vehicle, and off they went with a rush.

CHAPTER VII.—The Collision in the Road.

"Confound the luck!" growled Crandall, who was furious over the failure of their well-laid plans. "Only for this boy we'd have succeeded. People who butt in where they're not wanted ought to be made examples of."

"He knows how to use his fists, blame him!" responded Brett. "I'll have a black eye tomorrow as sure as fate, and my nose feels as sore as a boil. The first blow he gave me nearly broke my jaw."

"I can't understand how he came to be on hand at the critical moment," said Otis. "Seems as if he was on to us, and he pitched in when we were unprepared for his attack. I wouldn't be surprised but it is that young mechanic who boards with the Staples. You know him by sight, Crandall. Strike a match and see if it is he."

Crandall pulled out a silver match-safe, selected a match and struck it under the shelter of the front seat, as the auto left the last houses of the town behind and spun along the country road in the direction of Hathaway's establishment. Flashing the flame over the unconscious boy's face he saw that he was the young mechanic, Joe Warner. Crandall uttered a subdued imprecation. Although he had an indistinct idea that Joe had saved him from pitching down the freight elevator shaft the afternoon the foreman of the machine shop struck him, he felt no especial gratitude toward the boy. He had a standing contempt for people who belonged to the working classes, and as Joe was a plain mechanic, and a long way from being a skilled one at that, he regarded the lad with very little consideration.

"He's the chap you took him for," he said to Otis.

"You mean the young mechanic?"

"I do."

Otis whistled.

"He must have been hiding behind the hedge while we were talking."

"I don't see what brought him there."

"Nor I; but the evidence points that way. If he heard all we said he'll expose us, and the girl's father will probably have us arrested for attempted abduction."

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Nothing can be proved against us."

"I don't know about that," put in Brett. "Miss Staples will swear that one of us threw a shawl over her head."

"What if she does? She's got to identify us, which she won't be able to do, as she only caught a glimpse of us in the dark."

"The mechanic will be able to do it if he was watching us long enough. Remember, he may have seen our faces in the matchlight when we lighted our cigarettes."

Crandall uttered another imprecation. He was supposed to be a young gentleman, but his language wasn't always on a par with his social standing. In fact all the young dudes who frequented Hathaway's were not over particular at times, in respect to the words they used.

"If I was sure your suspicions were right I'd——"

"You'd what?" asked Brett as he paused.

"I'd go in for putting this cad where he wouldn't be able to testify against us."

"Where is that?" asked Brett curiously.

"Oh, I guess Hathaway would fix him for us."

"Is that where you intended to take him, that you were so anxious to get him into the auto?"

"No. I intended that we should take him out in the woods beyond here, tie him to a tree, give him a good licking, and leave him to get back to town as best he could."

"Is that still your intention?"

"I should like to do it if he doesn't know too much."

"And suppose Hathaway finds out that he knows enough to make trouble, what then?" asked Otis.

"He must be kept out of the way until the affair blows over."

"At Hathaway's?"

"I don't know of a better place."

"But Gid may object to taking charge of him on the ground that it might compromise him."

"He agreed to hold Miss Staples for a week or two, and that was a more ticklish job than holding this chap."

"It will cost you considerable to come to such an arrangement with Hathaway," said Brett. "If you could get him shipped off somewhere I think it would be the better plan."

"I'll see Hathaway about it. Your idea is a good one."

Joe had regained his senses while the foregoing conversation was going on, and after realizing that he was being carried somewhere in the auto, he listened to the talk with eager interest in order to find out all he could, which he might subsequently be able to use against the three young dudes. The boy's position, jammed in on the floor of the vehicle, was not a pleasant one. Furthermore, one of Crandall's shoes rested on his upturned arm, while the other was planted on his thigh. He couldn't make a move without attracting the secretary's attention, and Joe had an idea that it would be best for him to play 'possum for the present.

Having a good pair of ears he could distinctly hear all that passed between the three young men. Joe wasn't particularly concerned about what the immediate future held in store for him. He was confident that he could take care of himself under all circumstances. As long as Kittie had escaped the trap designed for her, he was contented. He even chuckled quietly when he thought of the smash in the ear he had given to Crandall, and the three sockdolagers he had treated Brett's face to. The auto was sweeping around a turn of the road and was going at a tidy clip. Otis, who was doing the driving, divided his attention pretty evenly between his duty in hand, and Crandall on the rear seat. The result was he didn't see a farm wagon jogging along in the middle of the road ahead, until Brett happened to notice it himself and yelled, "Look out, Bob. Shut off and put on the brakes or we'll be into that rig."

At the same time he grabbed the bulb alarm and squeezed it, sending forth a succession of most unearthly "honks." That sound woke up the driver ahead and he turned out of the way. Otis, however, was unable to stay the flight of the machine quick enough to clear the wagon. The thick rubber tire of the auto struck one of the hind wheels of the wagon with considerable force, smashed it and swung the vehicle around. The auto also veered out of its course and ran sideways into the fence, striking a pole, demolishing part of the fence, and then coming to a stop with a suddenness that jarred all hands badly.

"This is a high old note," cried Crandall, springing out into the road.

His companions followed suit. A few yards back the driver of the wagon was also standing in the road, gazing ruefully at the broken wheel which had let that end of the vehicle down on the sole support of the hub.

"Release the brake, Otis, and let us back the machine into the road," said Crandall. "I hope it isn't damaged so we can't proceed."

The three got busy, but the auto was stuck fast in the ruins of the fence.

"We'll have to borrow that man's horses," said Crandall, at last. "Our strength is not sufficient in this emergency."

"You'll have to pay him for his broken wheel

or it isn't likely he'll accommodate us with the use of his horses to help us out. That is where he has the bulge on us," said Brett.

"Well, let's go over and argue the matter with him," said Crandall.

Accordingly, quite forgetful of their prisoner, the three young men walked over to the spot where the teamster stood figuring out the problem of how he was going to proceed on three wheels, with the load of agricultural implements he had.

CHAPTER VIII.—Joe's Escape and Return to Town.

Joe had been shaken up as well as the others in the auto when the machine came into contact with the fence, but he was not hurt beyond a cut lip. While Crandall and his companions were trying unsuccessfully to back the auto he saw the chance to jump out and make his escape in the darkness. He did not take immediate advantage of the opportunity, however, as he saw that the machine was stuck fast, and he thought he'd wait a while to see what the dudes were going to do under the circumstances. When he heard Crandall talk about getting the teamster's horses to pull the auto clear, he concluded to slip away before they put this plan into practice. He waited till they walked away, and then crawling out on the side of the broken fence, he crept away under cover of the bushes, till he reached a point opposite the disabled wagon. There he stopped to watch the progress of negotiations between Crandall and the driver of the farm vehicle.

"I want to borrow your horses to pull my machine back into the road," said the secretary of the Crandall Works.

The teamster favored him with an angry stare.

"Are you the owner of that auto?" he asked.

"I am."

"Are you going to pay me for the damage you've done my wagon?"

"I am not responsible for that. You took up more than your share of the road, and when we tooted, you moved aside so slowly that we struck your wheel, and that caused the auto to shy into the fence where it is stuck. I think I have a better case against you than you have against me. I'll let you off if you'll lend me your horses."

"Why don't you back with your own power? I've seen them machines move both ways."

"It won't back for some reason. We want the use of your horses to pull it clear so we can examine it."

"Give me \$5 to pay for a new wheel and I'll help you get your machine into the road."

Crandall handed him a note and then the driver assumed a friendly attitude. He attached his horses to the rear of the auto and they dragged it back to the road. The teamster then rehitched his horses to his own wagon and drove off slowly, walking in the road himself. Crandall took off his coat and crawled under his auto to see what the difficulty was there. While he was thus employed, Brett remembered their prisoner and looked for him. He found he had disappeared.

"The beggar recovered his senses while we were talking to the farmer and made his escape," he said to Otis. "Crandall will be hot when he finds out that the mechanic has taken French leave."

Crandall called for a couple of tools and he patched up the trouble so that the auto was in shape to resume its journey.

"All aboard," he said. "Let's get on."

"No use of going any further," said Brett, "the prisoner has skipped."

"The dickens!" ejaculated Crandall, looking at the space between the seats where their late prisoner had been stowed, and finding the place vacant. "When did he get away? Why didn't you let me know in time and we'd have given chase to him."

"I didn't see him when he got away. That must have happened while we were talking to the farmer," replied Brett.

Crandall said a number of things expressive of his chagrin at the escape of Joe Warner, but the exhibition did not do him any good. Finally he said:

"Of course he's started back for town. We'll turn back, too. Maybe we'll be able to recapture him."

Brett shrugged his shoulders. Both he and Otis thought it very unlikely that the young mechanic would permit himself to be recaptured. As a matter of fact, Joe hadn't started for town yet. He was still crouching behind the fence, watching his late captors. He saw them get into the machine, turn around and start back for Darien. Then he came out from his hiding-place and followed on foot.

"I've got quite a walk before me," he muttered. "I must be all of four or five miles on the road to Newgate. Well, a little extra exercise won't do me any harm."

Presently he heard the sound of wheels behind. A light wagon, driven by a boy, came up. Joe hailed him and he reined in.

"How far are you going?" asked the young mechanic.

"To town."

"Give me a ride and I'll give you a quarter."

"Jump in," replied the youth.

Joe sprang up beside him and offered him the money.

"Can you spare it?" asked the boy, thinking that if Joe was tramping the country road that he could not have much money.

"Sure. Take it."

"I'll be glad to have it, for I don't see many quarters; but I don't want to rob you."

"Don't worry about robbing me. There is more where that came from."

"How far have you walked?" asked the boy. "From Newgate?"

"Hardly," laughed Joe. "I've walked about a quarter of a mile."

"That all? Where did you come from? There isn't a house this side of the roadhouse, and that's two miles from here."

"I started from the turn in the road."

"But you must have walked to the turn."

"No," replied Joe.

"How did you get there, then?"

"In an automobile."

"No auto passed me."

"This vehicle came from Darien."

"Then I ought to have met it."

"No. It only went as far as the turn, where I got out, and then it went back again."

"Why did you get out at that lonely spot?"

And how is it that you are going back the way you came?" asked the boy, looking puzzled.

"Well, you see, the chaps in the auto brought me out this way against my will, and I am taking advantage of your team to get back to town without walking."

"Did they bring you out to make you walk back?"

"No. They had another purpose which went wrong on account of a collision we had with a farm wagon."

"I met a wagon going on three wheels," said the boy.

"That was the vehicle we butted into."

Just then they came in sight of the auto. It was standing still and Crandall was tinkering at it again.

"Is that the auto ahead?" asked the boy.

"I judge that it is. Drive by it quickly. I don't want those fellows to hold you up and drag me off the seat."

"Why should they do that?"

"Because they're down on me and want to get me in their power."

"Oh," said the boy, whipping up his mare.

Joe bent over and turned his face away as they came up with the auto and passed it. He was not recognized by either Brett or Otis, much to his satisfaction. Before they had gone on half a mile they heard the "chug-chug" of the auto behind at a spanking gait.

"Keep well to the right," said Joe. "Give them as much of the road as possible."

The boy did so, and again Joe bent down and kept his face averted. The auto swept by like a small whirlwind, its occupants paying very little attention to the two boys perched on the wagon seat. In a few minutes the machine was out of sight, and Joe breathed easier. In due course they entered the town, and Joe got down at the nearest point to his home. It was nearly eleven o'clock when he reached the Staples' cottage. There was a light in the sitting-room. He entered with his latch-key, and the sound of his footsteps brought Kittie into the hall. Her eyes were red as if she had been crying, and she looked worried. The moment she saw him she sprang forward with a glad cry.

"Oh, Joe, where did those men carry you off to?" she exclaimed, catching him by the hand. "Father has notified the police, and a couple of officers have been sent out to hunt for you and the auto."

"They carried me about five miles out along the county road and then I managed to get away from them."

"Who were those young men? Do you know? One of them threw a shawl over my head, and when he pulled it away you were fighting with them. I heard you call out to me to run, but I didn't, because I couldn't understand why I should do so."

"I suppose you will be surprised to learn that you were the cause of the whole business," said Joe.

"Me the cause!" ejaculated Kittie, greatly surprised. "What do you mean?"

"Are your father and mother in the sitting-room?"

"They are."

"Then we will go in there and I will make one story of it."

Joe's appearance was hailed with satisfaction by Mr. and Mrs. Staples. They, too, wanted to know how far he had been carried in the auto, and what, if anything, its occupants had done to him.

"I'd better begin my story at the beginning, and then you'll understand it better," said the young mechanic. "I think you'll admit that it is a serious matter, and will call for the services of the police. To begin with, Arthur Crandall, aided by two of his friends, intended to kidnap Kittie tonight, and no doubt would have succeeded, had I not been on the spot to queer them."

Had a bombshell exploded in the little room it could scarcely have created a greater sensation than Joe's words.

"What's that?" gasped Mr. Staples. "Arthur Crandall intended to kidnap our Kittie?"

"Yes, sir. The note that Kittie got tonight through a small boy, signed apparently by Hattie Forrest, was not sent by Hattie."

"It wasn't?" cried Kittie, in astonishment.

She was not aware that the note was a fake one, because after Joe's abduction in the automobile she had run home as quickly as possible to carry the news of the trouble Joe had got into, to her father.

"No, it wasn't. Arthur Crandall got somebody to write it in order to decoy you out of the house to the spot where he and his friends were waiting with his auto to catch and carry you off to Hathaway's roadhouse, where you were to be kept a prisoner for a week or two."

"How do you know that this is so?" asked Mr. Staples, looking very serious, indeed.

"Because I overheard enough of what Crandall and his friends said while they were waiting for Kittie to come along to form a correct idea of the game they were up to. I was hiding behind the hedge just inside of the gate of the front yard of the Taylor cottage where I had gone to see Will. I didn't see him, however, because he was out."

Joe then went on and narrated everything that had happened, including what Crandall and his associates, Brett and Otis, had said to one another with respect to their designs on Kittie.

"When Kittie came up, Brett stepped up and spoke to her," continued Joe. "You remember that, don't you, Kittie?"

"Yes," she replied breathlessly.

"That was to attract your attention and give Crandall the chance to throw the shawl he had over your head. He did throw it over your head, as you know, but that was where I chipped in. I sprang at Crandall and dealt him a blow under the ear. He fell back and dragged the shawl off your head, and then you jumped out of the way as I shouted to you to run."

Joe went on with his story, narrating the conversation he had overheard in the auto after he recovered his senses and found he was being carried off in the vehicle. He told about the collision in the road, his escape, and his return to town in the wagon. When he concluded, Mr. Staples started up and reached for his hat.

"Where are you going?" asked his wife.

"To secure a warrant for the arrest of Arthur Crandall and his two associates. This attempt to carry our daughter off is the most outrageous piece of business I ever heard of. If there is justice in this town those young men shall be pun-

ished, even if it costs me my job at the works."

There was wrath and determination on the foreman's face as he strode hastily from the room.

CHAPTER IX.—The Awkward Predicament of Crandall, Brett and Otis.

Staples secured warrants that night at the home of one of the city magistrates for the arrest of Arthur Crandall and his friends Brett and Otis, on the charge of attempted abduction of Kittie Staples, and the warrants were put in the hands of the police to execute. Brett, whose first name was Clarence, was the son of the president of the Darien National Bank, the leading financial institution in town; while Frank Otis was the son of the most distinguished lawyer in Darien. A detective went to the home of each of the young men, who lived within a short distance of one another on fashionable Bradhurst Avenue, but although it was long after midnight none of them was at home. The detectives hovered around the houses all night, but their quarry did not show up.

The escape of Joe Warner, whose importance as a witness against them in the event of their arrest for the attempted abduction of Kittie Staples they fully understood, upset all their calculations, and after a consultation, they decided that it wouldn't be healthy for them to show themselves in Darien until their parents and friends had hushed the trouble up. They therefore took the night express, which stopped at the town at midnight, and early next morning registered at a hotel in the chief city of the adjoining State. The Darien morning papers had the story of the attempted kidnapping of Kittie Staples by Crandall, Brett and Otis, and the failure of the detectives to find the accused, warranted the belief that the young men had gone into hiding.

Of course the story created a profound sensation at the breakfast tables of the best society in the town, and carried consternation into the homes of the three young sprigs of fashion. While the friends of the alleged kidnappers regarded it simply as a lark on the part of the young chaps, the general public viewed the matter in quite a different light. The afternoon papers, after their reporters had fully investigated the case, said the affair was an outrage, and that the three young men ought to be made an example of as an object lesson to others who, owing to their family connections, fancied they could commit high-handed acts with impunity.

Public sympathy flowed toward the Staples family, while Joe Warner was regarded as a plucky boy who had done the best he could to save the girl under strenuous circumstances. Joe was the hero of the shop, and of the whole establishment for that matter, that day, and for many days thereafter. Vincent Staples was called to the private office by Mr. Crandall, and asked for a general statement of the unfortunate affair. The foreman was a man who didn't mince his words when he knew he was in the right, and he was outspoken in regard to the treatment his daughter had received at the hands of Arthur Crandall.

He told the president of the works that the matter was altogether too serious to be overlooked, and that he intended to prosecute his nephew, as

soon as he was arrested, whether he lost his job in consequence or not. Mr. Crandall assured him that he regretted the incident deeply, and did not intend to screen his relative from the consequences of his foolishness. He told the foreman that, much as he deplored the necessity of the case being sifted out in a court of justice, he could not blame the attitude assumed by Staples in defense of his daughter, and therefore, no matter what came of the affair, he would not be discharged from the works. Crandall, Brett and Otis communicated with their relatives in a day or two and asked for funds. They alleged that the whole matter was merely intended as a joke, and denied in the most positive terms that they had any intention of holding the girl a prisoner even over night.

The newspaper stories they denounced as sensational, and almost wholly devoid of truth, printed largely to prejudice popular opinion against them, because they were connected with the aristocracy of Darien. The feelings of the general public were more or less against the wealthy, and the newspapers believed it was to their interest to pander to that sentiment. The immediate relatives of Clarence Brett and Frank Otis naturally sympathized with their own flesh and blood. Money was forwarded them, with expressions of confidence, and measures taken to quash the trouble. Mr. Crandall was not such an easy mark. He wrote a letter, unaccompanied by a remittance, to his nephew, in which he expressed his opinion of that young man's conduct in a manner that made his hair curl.

"If you will return and face the accusation like a man I will provide a lawyer to defend you, but if you are convicted you must take your medicine," concluded the president of the Crandall Works.

The letter almost gave young Crandall a fit, for, unlike the letters received by Brett and Otis, his uncle wasted no sympathy on him, and, what was worse, sent him no money, so that he was obliged to borrow from his two friends to pay his way. Lawyer Otis invited Mr. Brett and Mr. Crandall to confer with him at his office in respect to the awkward dilemma in which the three young men had placed themselves. Both gentlemen responded, but Mr. Crandall's attitude at the interview was not particularly encouraging, as he was satisfied his nephew was guilty, and wouldn't be able to clear himself. As an accessory was just as guilty in the eyes of the law as the principal, he told Lawyer Otis and Banker Brett quite frankly that their sons were in a bad scrape, and he didn't see how they were going to get out of it without paying some kind of a penalty.

Banker Brett said he'd rather lose \$50,000 than have his son brought up in court on such a serious charge, and suggested that compensation be offered to Miss Staples as an inducement to her and her family to let the matter drop. Mr. Crandall said that he could not wholly approve of the suggestion, as it was in the nature of a bribe. He added that Vincent Staples, the girl's father, was not an easy man to deal with on such lines. He might resent the offer to the extent of notifying the newspapers that a bribe had been offered his daughter to withdraw the charge, and that would tend to complicate matters for the young men.

Still, he said, if the matter could be arranged,

he would pay his share toward it. The result was an emissary waited on Mr. Staples at his home a few days later, and in the most delicate way asked if some arrangement could not be made by which the charge against the young men could be withdrawn.

"No, I don't think so," replied Vincent Staples flatly.

"But, my dear sir, consider the position in which these young gentlemen, scions of three of the most influential families in Darien, are placed," said the visitor, who was Lawyer Otis' right-hand legal assistant.

"That's their lookout, not mine," replied the foreman shortly. "Think of what my daughter would have suffered had they carried out their outrageous design."

"We have the positive assurance from the young men that the whole affair was merely a lark. They had no intention of abducting your daughter. They merely intended to give her a short ride in the auto and then leave her at her home."

"I don't care anything about their assurances. They'll say anything to squeeze out of this affair. Joe Warner happened to be in a position to overhear their plans and he knows that there was no joke about the thing at all."

"But this Warner's evidence is uncorroborated and will be valueless in court. The young men's denial will be as good as, if not better than, his statement."

"His evidence will be corroborated by circumstances, and still more by the decoy note now in our possession. You will find when the case gets into court that Warner's testimony will count."

The visitor wanted to see the note in question, but Mr. Staples declined to show it on the ground that he had been advised not to do it. The emissary then introduced, in an indirect way, the suggestion of compensation to Miss Staples, not as a bribe, he wished Mr. Staples to understand, but simply as an act of justice on the part of the young men's parents out of sympathy for the girl. Mr. Staples cut him short by saying that no such thing would be considered. The lawyer, having exhausted his stock of diplomacy, then withdrew and reported to Mr. Otis that his mission had been a failure. He told the big lawyer that the existence of the decoy note was a feature of the case that was decidedly serious, and would, if introduced in court, tend to substantiate the uncorroborated testimony of the boy, Joe Warner.

"The best thing you can do, in my opinion, is to try and buy off the young mechanic," said the chief clerk. "He is the stumbling block in your way. If you can fix matters with him, the charge against your son and his companions will not hold water, even with the decoy note."

"Very well," replied Lawyer Otis. "I leave the matter to you. Offer him any price, \$50,000 if necessary, and the money will be forthcoming."

The young lawyer bowed and left the room.

CHAPTER X.—In Which the Young Mechanic Refuses to Be Bribed.

Two weeks had passed away since the night of the attempted abduction of Kittie Staples, and the public had forgotten all about the affair. Crandall, Brett and Otis were having a good time

in New York, while waiting for their relatives to fix things up so they could return to Darien without fear of the law. Kittie and Joe were on more intimate terms than ever, Joe, on his part, was already half in love with Kittie, and he showed his feelings in many ways. The foreman's daughter, however, did not occupy his thoughts wholly. During the day he devoted himself entirely to getting ahead in the mechanical work of the shop, and he was making great progress. He occupied half his nights with the study of engineering. He had made the acquaintance of the night engineer of the public water works, and he spent many hours of the week in his company in the engine-room. The engineer explained the workings of the big engine that did duty during the day, and the smaller one he ran himself at night. He showed Joe how to start and stop it, and let him do it several times. He let him oil up all those parts not provided with automatic oilers, in fact gave him as much practical experience with the engine as possible. Under such favorable conditions it wasn't long before Joe could handle an engine with a good deal of confidence. One night Joe had a long talk with the engineer about the condenser. He had brought along a book on engineering which had sectional drawings of both surface and jet condensers, with a full explanation of their construction and the work they performed in connection with the steam-engine. He went over it bit by bit with the engineer, who explained in a simple way what he couldn't understand from the printed matter. The boy finally wanted to know if it wasn't really possible for an expert to invent some method for doing away with the air-pump.

"I don't think so," replied the engineer.

"I should think an arrangement could be studied out by which the small amount of air in the feed-water of the boiler could be prevented from entering the condenser with the exhaust steam, that would produce a perfect vacuum in the condenser, and the condensed water could be returned to the boiler by a different method than the air-pump."

"I guess your idea has been threshed out by the best engineering heads during the past hundred years, and the results now in operation are about as close to a perfect vacuum as will ever be achieved," replied the engineer.

"There was a man named Parks, who worked in our shop some time before I came there, who tried to work the subject out but failed," said Joe.

"I'm not surprised to hear that he failed."

"He was quite a mechanical genius in his way. He made a perfect model stationary engine, of the horizontal type, as could be put together. He left it behind him and as he is dead the foreman gave it to me to monkey with if I wanted to."

"Does it work like a big engine?"

"It does, except with respect to the condenser. Parks made the engine in order to demonstrate the value of his own condenser in which he aimed to produce a perfect vacuum. Some day I mean to study up the principles he worked upon and see if I can reach the end he was after."

"It won't do you any harm to do so, or the contrary you will learn a whole lot, but I'm afraid you'll never arrive at the solution you have in your mind. But while trying to reach the impossible you may make some valuable discoveries in another line that might ultimately lead to both

fame and fortune. Such things happen almost everyday. The alchemists of the Middle Ages devoted their whole energies to the transmutation of base metals into gold. They did not succeed a little bit, but for all that, they laid the foundations of one of the most important of sciences—namely, chemistry." One evening when Joe started for the engine-room of the water works, he was approached by a well-dressed young gentleman, none other than the chief clerk of Lawyer Otis. He handed the young mechanic his card, and requested the privilege of a short conversation with him.

"I suppose we can talk as we walk along, Mr. Page," said Joe, wondering what the gentleman could want with him.

"Certainly. It will save time, as you appear to be in a hurry."

"What do you wish to see me about?"

"It's rather a delicate matter, to be frank with you, Warner. To begin with, I may say that I represent the families of the three young men implicated in what seems to me the almost ridiculous charge of trying to abduct Miss Staples. You are a sensible young fellow, Warner, and so I am sure I can talk with you in a frank way. The young men in question undoubtedly committed a foolish act in trying to play a practical joke on so estimable a young lady as Miss Staples is, for upon my honor it was really only intended as a joke, though it appears you took it in the light of a criminal act."

"You may regard it as a foolish prank, Mr. Page, but I have better reason to size it up in its true light," replied Joe, with some dignity. "I know of my own knowledge that Arthur Crandall, the ringleader of the affair, has annoyed Miss Staples for many months off and on, by his unwelcome attentions. One afternoon not so long ago he came into our shop, where Mr. Staples is foreman, and made a proposition to Miss Staple's father, that you, had you been in his place, would have considered insulting. Mr. Staples in his indignation struck Crandall, and being a powerful man, the blow was not a light one. Crandall would have had Mr. Staples discharged for that if he could have managed it, but he found he couldn't. Nevertheless, he meant to have revenge, and decided that the most effective way by which he could get back at the foreman was through his daughter—a cowardly way, you must admit. Well, he resolved on kidnaping the girl with the help of his friends, Brett and Otis. While it is true that Brett and Otis had no interest themselves in the matter, beyond a willingness to accommodate Crandall, still they are of age, and college-bred men, so they must have known that such an enterprise was a criminal one in the eyes of the law, and so by going into it with their eyes open they invited the trouble in which they now find themselves. If you think they are deserving of sympathy, I don't."

Lawyer Page listened to the young mechanic with not a little surprise. His common-sense summing up of the situation, as well as the good language he used, proved that the shop-boy was a well-educated lad.

"A most uncommon boy this," thought the lawyer. "He may be a mechanic in a business sense, but he has the education and deportment of a young gentleman. He springs from good stock. His people must have come down in life. What

is bred in the bone is bound to manifest itself sooner or later. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, nor can you make a sow's ear out of a silk purse. Dear me, I'm afraid it will be quite useless for me to try and buy this young man off. I'll have to try the art of persuasion. If that fails, I'll have to give it up."

"I must admit that you have stated the case in a straightforward and honest way, Warner, but I think, considering that no harm came to Miss Staples, you are a bit too hard on the foolish young men. At present they are out of the jurisdiction of the State, and it would require legal process to bring them to Darien to face the charge, supposing they could be found, which isn't at all certain while this cloud rests on them. Now supposing they are brought back, or induced to return of their own accord, and they should be convicted on your evidence, and sent to prison, can't you see how that would almost ruin their young careers? And who would really be the chief sufferers? Who but their parents, who represent the best society of this town? It would be a lasting disgrace to their families as well as themselves. After you have thought this phase of the matter over, Warner, I am sure you will think twice before you will consent to be the instrument for bringing such a thing about."

"That's all right, Mr. Page, but you forget one thing—a man or a boy is expected to do his duty, no matter how unpleasant that may be to himself or others. I am the chief witness in this case, and my first duty is to Miss Staples. It isn't her fault, nor mine, that the young fellows mixed up in the outrage—for it was an outrage, no matter how their friends may look at it—have brought themselves and their parents to the verge of disgrace. If I am called on to testify against them I've got to do it, whether I care to do so or not. I haven't any choice in the matter. If your errand is to try to induce me to act differently it is a failure."

The lawyer was nonplussed. However, he felt that he could not draw off without carrying out his instructions, which were to try and buy the boy off if all else failed. He was almost satisfied now that this could not be accomplished, and he approached the point with some misgivings.

"You are a young man on the threshold of life," he said to Joe, "and I judge that your future will depend entirely on your own exertions."

"Yes, sir," replied the young mechanic, regarding this new turn in the conversation with some surprise.

"It would be a great benefit to you if you had money or an influential friend or two at your back," the lawyer went on.

"I suppose so, but we can't all expect to be so fortunate."

"It remains with yourself to acquire both."

"What do you mean?" asked Joe, greatly astonished.

"If you could see your way to assure the friends of Crandall, Brett and Otis that you would not appear against the young men in this abduction case, their gratitude would assume a very substantial form."

"Oh!" ejaculated Joe.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they presented you

with a cash testimonial of \$25,000, or even more."

"As a bribe to hold my tongue, eh? Well, as you seem to be their emissary, please tell them that there isn't money enough in the United States to buy me off. Good-evening," and Joe Warner, with head erect, walked across the street to the engine-room of the power-house, leaving the lawyer much chagrined at the unsatisfactory result of the interview.

CHAPTER XI—Plotting Against the Young Mechanic.

Next morning Chief Clerk reported to Lawyer Otis the non-success of his mission to persuade or bribe the young mechanic to alter his determination to appear against the three young dudes if they were brought into a court of justice. This was a great disappointment, both to Mr. Otis and Banker Brett, who thought that the power of the mighty dollar was irresistible. Both gentlemen immediately wrote to their sons, enclosing a new bank-draft, telling them that there was no immediate prospect of their returning to Darien without danger of arrest, owing to their inability to make any terms at all with Joe Warner, the chief witness in the case. Mr. Crandall also wrote a brief note to his nephew, enclosing a draft for a sum sufficient to meet the young man's expenses for a while. The three dudes read their letters, which all came by the same mail, and then gathered in Crandall's room for a consultation.

"New York is all very well in its way, but I'd like to get back to my native heath," said Crandall.

"Same here," nodded Brett.

"Ditto," interjected Otis laconically.

"It appears from our letters that that beastly young mechanic is the stumbling-block in our path," went on Crandall.

"That's what he is," replied Brett gloomily.

"I'd like to know what kind of a phenomenon he is," said Otis. "My governor writes me that Page, his clerk, offered him \$25,000 for his silence, but he turned the offer down. If I was offered half that amount for a similar service I'd take it quick as a wink. Why, \$25,000 would set that chap up for life. He must be a fool."

"We've got to do something, chappies," said Crandall. "We can't remain away from our stamping-grounds forever."

"Better stay in New York than go to jail," said Brett.

"An iron cot and bread and water, or soup, or some other rot is on the prison bill of fare, wouldn't suit me for a copper cent," growled Otis.

"It seems to me that we'll have to take the bull by the horns," said Crandall.

"Kindly elucidate your meaning," grinned Brett.

"We must remove the stumbling-block from our path."

"Meaning the young mechanic," said Otis.

"I don't mean anyone else," answered Crandall with an ominous frown.

"How is he to be removed?" asked Brett.

"I have an idea that Hathaway is the boy to

do the trick if the compensation is sufficiently weighty."

"I'll undertake to guarantee that money is no object with my people where my welfare is concerned," said Brett. "If you think you can bribe Hathaway to get this mechanic away from Darien, and keep him away for any reasonable amount, I'll engage to produce my share."

"So will I," said Otis.

"As it won't do to put our proposition down in black and white, it will be necessary for one of us to visit him at the roadhouse."

"Not me, thank you," said Brett. "I'd rather be excused from visiting the scene of our scrape until things have been fixed up."

"I also entertain a serious objection to running my head into the lion's jaw for the present at least," put in Otis. "As you have proposed the plan, I move that you be unanimously selected as a committee of one to call on Hathaway and make the best arrangement and terms with him you can."

"There is no occasion for you to worry, chap-pies. I intend to go myself. I understand Sid from the ground-floor up, and consequently I wouldn't let anybody else undertake the mission."

"You are so well known in Darien that you are almost sure to be recognized," said Brett.

"I'll bet you a ten-spot that nobody will recognize me in town," replied Crandall confidently.

"Then you mean to go there in disguise," said Otis.

"I don't intend to take any more chances than I can help."

"What kind of a disguise are you going to use?"

"I haven't decided yet. I'm going to get a costumer to fix me up."

"He might suspect you of contemplating some crooked work and refuse to help you out."

"I don't think so. There is nothing suggestive of a crook about me."

"He might take you for a gentlemanly Raffles," laughed Brett.

"What kind of an arrangement do you expect to make with Hathaway if you reach his place all right?" asked Otis.

"I'm going to offer him a good sum to kidnap young Warner and send him off somewhere, so he won't get back until after we have had this unpleasant matter settled for good."

"Hathaway might consider the contract too dangerous to undertake. What will you do then?" said Otis.

"I think Hathaway has his price for doing most anything short of murder or manslaughter. I sized him up long ago. At any rate I will offer him enough to make his mouth water. Our people will cough up anything within reason."

"My father will," said Brett.

"And mine, too," put in Otis.

"My uncle has soured on me over this, but still for the honor of the family name he won't let me go to prison if he can prevent it."

"When do you intend to start?" asked Brett.

"Proably to-morrow."

"Well, let's go down to the cafe and drink success to your negotiations," said Otis. This suggestion met with approval and and they were presently standing before the hotel bar, giving their orders for three high-balls. In the mean-

time, Joe, the young mechanic, was pursuing the even tenor of his way in Darien, quite unconscious that he was being plotted against. He had told Mr. Staples about the interview he had had with Mr. Page, representative of the families of the young men concerned in the attempted kidnapping affair. He said the gentleman had intimated that he could have \$25,000 if he would refuse to appear as a witness in court.

"That's a pretty big bribe," replied the foreman. "What answer did you give him?"

"What answer would you expect me to give him? I refused. I told him that there isn't money enough in the country to bribe me, and I mean it."

"You're one boy in a thousand, Joe," said Mr. Staples, grasping him by the hand. "A boy of your caliber is bound to make his mark in the world if he lives. You will make yours, and I trust I may live to see you at the top of the heap."

"I mean to make my way. I guess you are satisfied with the record I am making in the shop."

"Perfectly. I never saw a young fellow catch on quicker than you have. You never have to be told twice what to do, and you seldom make a mistake. The men have all remarked your capability. You are a great favorite with them because you are ready at any time to give one them a helping hand at anything. You will surely be as popular a man as you are a boy, and that counts for a whole lot in the race of life, that is provided——"

"Provided what?"

"Popularity does not ruin you as it does some men. However, I have little fear of that. I am sure you have a level head and can say 'No' when the word is necessary, and stick to it."

"Yes, sir. I said 'No' to Mr. Page, and I mean to stick to it."

"I don't mean that kind of 'No.' A person of honor and principle finds that easy enough to say and stick to it. What I mean is one who is popular is continually up against the temptations of life. He is supposed to be what is known as a good fellow. A good fellow is generally his own worst enemy. Many a good fellow who started out with the most brilliant prospects wound up in potter's field. Be a good fellow within the limits that do justice to yourself."

"Yes, sir. That is what I mean to do," Joe said, as he and Mr. Staples entered the house together and found supper waiting for them to sit down to it.

CHAPTER XII.—In the Haunted House.

The next day was Sunday, and in the afternoon Joe and his particular friend, Tom Taylor, started out for a spin on their wheels along the county road toward Newgate. They decided to go as far as the roadhouse, six miles out of town, and then turn back. At the head of the lane, about a quarter of a mile from Hathaway's place, stood an old deserted farmhouse, fast going to ruin. It had the reputation of being haunted, because the farmer who built it went crazy and killed his whole family, winding up by shooting himself. It now belonged to two minors for whom it was held in trust. When the boys reached the lane leading to the old house Tom said:

"I say, Joe, let's go over and inspect that old rookery."

"The haunted house, eh? What do you want to go there for?"

"Just to say I've been there. People avoid it as if it was a plague spot, but I don't see anything to be afraid of."

"It's all right in the daylight, when the sun is shining as it is now, but I'll bet you wouldn't be so anxious to inspect it if it was night-time," said Joe.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom, as they rode up the lane. "I don't believe in spooks, anyway. I don't know anybody who ever saw one."

"You ought to read the 'Transactions of the Psychical Research Society.' Maybe you'd change your mind on the subject."

"The Psychical Research Society! Never heard of it," replied Tom. "What is it?"

"Oh, it's an organization of scientists and others who have made it their business to collect data on the supernatural and investigate the same for the purpose of demonstrating beyond a reasonable doubt the actual existence of spiritual phenomena."

"Have they proved that there is such a thing as a ghost?" asked Tom, in a skeptical tone.

"They seem to think they have."

"Pooh! All bosh!"

"You ought to read their pamphlets. The books detail many marvelous facts that have come within their notice, and which they have investigated to their satisfaction," said Joe.

"Where will I find those pamphlets?"

"They've got some of them at the Mechanics' Library. One of the attendants put me on to them one evening that I took out a book on engineering."

"How did you come to do that?"

"Somebody had just returned one of the books when I stepped up to the counter and he called my attention to it."

"And you took the book home and read it, eh?"

"Yes. I found it very interesting."

"And now you believe in ghosts, I suppose," chuckled Tom.

"I believe there are phenomena that cannot be explained by any natural law so far known to the most intelligent minds. Well, here we are. I see the kitchen door is ajar. Are you thinking of going inside and looking the place over?"

"Sure. Come on."

They stood their wheels against the wall of the kitchen ell and entered. The boys expected to find the interior of the house as bare as a new constructed building. It wasn't. Nothing seemed to have been removed from the day it was abandoned.

The carpets, white with dust, lay on the floors. The furniture stood about, also covered with dust and in many cases festooned with cobwebs. Upstairs the boys found the bedclothes moldy, yellow and smothered in dust. Tom opened the bureau drawers, but their contents had been taken away. Their inspection showed that nothing of any value had been left in the house outside of the furnishings.

"I wonder why the furniture, carpets and other things were not taken away and sold?" said Tom. "A second-hand man would have given something for them originally."

"Probably they were left with the idea of renting the house furnished," replied Joe.

"When the new owner found that he couldn't rent it at any price I should think he would have cleaned the stuff out then."

"Well, if you're anxious to know all about it you'll have to see the owner."

"I've heard that it was left to a couple of kids who live in Newgate. If it had been left to me I'll bet I'd found somebody to live in it and run the farm. Seems to me it's a case of give a dog a bad name and it will stick to him."

They were standing by one of the windows on the second floor looking out.

"Hello!" exclaimed Joe. "There's a couple of men coming up the lane." Tom looked.

"One of them is Sid Hathaway, the ex-pugilist, who runs the roadhouse."

"You mean the chunky, smooth-faced fellow?"

"Of course. The other chap doesn't look like a prizefighter even a little bit. He seems to be all whiskers. I wonder what they are coming here for?"

"Probably Hathaway considers this haunted house as one of the attractions of the neighborhood and has brought his companion here to show it to him," said Joe.

"Say, let's go down and hide in the sitting-room closet, and when they come in the room we'll make a few ghostly noises and give them a shock," chuckled Taylor, who thought he had struck a bright idea.

"Do you expect to frighten a fellow like Hathaway in broad daylight?" asked Joe.

"We can try it, anyhow. It will be a good joke."

"He might not take it as a joke, and we might have reason to regret trying to be funny."

"I thought you were nervy enough to do 'most anything."

"I don't see any nerve about your plan. I think it is rather a foolish thing to do."

In the meantime Hathaway and the man with the whiskers entered the yard of the haunted farmhouse, and made straight for the rear of the building. The boys, as they came downstairs, heard their footsteps in the kitchen. Joe and Tom were in the hall near the sitting-room, which stood half open, when the ex-prizefighter and his companion entered the room.

"Dust off one of these chairs, Crandall, and we'll sit down and have our talk out here," said Hathaway.

Joe gave a start of surprise when he heard the ex-pugilist address the man with the whiskers as Crandall. It instantly struck the young machinist that Arthur Crandall was hovering about the neighborhood in disguise with some object in view. What that object was he wanted to learn, for he wasn't sure but it was connected with Kittie Staples. Whispering Tom to hold back and keep as quiet as a mouse, Joe advanced to the sitting-room door and listened. He heard the sound of thumping, as the men removed the dust from the seats of two of the chairs, then they seated themselves beside one of the windows.

"Now I'll listen to your scheme, Crandall, but mind you, I won't promise to take up with it if it's too dangerous. I've got a good business at the roadhouse, and I ain't goin' to sacrifice it just to make an extra wad. It wouldn't pay."

"I'm not asking you to do something for nothing, Hathaway. You'll be well paid if you help the three of us out of our pickle."

"You ought to have been more careful about that affair and then you and your friends wouldn't have got in trouble over it. I thought

you chaps had pull enough, anyway, to get out of 'most any kind of a tight hole. Lawrence, whose old man is chief of the police department, is a particular friend of yours. Why can't you fix things through him?"

"There are warrants out for the three of us, and he couldn't sidetrack them," replied Crandall.

"What's the difference if you chaps were arrested? Your people would bail you out in no time. You needn't even see the inside of a cell."

"But we'd be tried in the end, and convicted on the evidence of that young mechanic. If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't care."

"Why don't your people buy him off? That ought to be easy."

"Well, it isn't easy. He's been offered \$25,000 for his silence and he refused to take it."

"Twenty-five thousand dollars!" whistled the ex-fighter. "Oh, come now, you don't expect me to believe that, do you?"

"It's a fact, whether you believe it or not. He seems to be one of those incorruptible goody-goodies that I thought were only to be met with in novels. Those kind of chaps give me a pain. A man who doesn't look out for number one in this world always gets left."

"He must be a remarkable boy to turn down a bribe of \$25,000. Maybe he was afraid he wouldn't get it. Was the money laid down under his nose?"

"No, but he'd have got it, all right."

"Well, what's your scheme? I take it you want to get this young mechanic out of the way for good. If you promise to turn that \$25,000 into my pocket I'll talk business with you."

"I couldn't promise any such thing. I might be able to get you \$5,000, but——"

"Five thousand wouldn't pay me to monkey with a buzzsaw."

"Five thousand is a lot of money," said Crandall.

"I know it is, but I don't believe in takin' a big risk for that sum," replied Hathaway, who thought he saw his way clear to making a much better bargain.

"Well, suppose I can raise \$10,000, will you go into this thing?"

The ex-prizefighter considered the matter. Ten thousand dollars was quite a tempting offer. But then there was considerable risk about the job, and he hadn't yet figured out how it could be accomplished successfully.

"I'll have to think the thing over before I give you a positive answer," he said. "You want this boy kidnapped and sent off somewhere."

"He must be sent where he can't get back in a hurry," said Crandall.

"That's the delicate part of it," said Hathaway. "The world is so blamed small these days that I don't know where in thunder a person can be sent that he can't get back again, if he wants to, in a short time."

"If somebody was paid well for preventing him from coming back, wouldn't that fill the bill?" asked Crandall.

"It might," admitted Hathaway. "Of course, I'd have to find such a person."

"Certainly. If you take the contract it will be up to you to put it through from A to Z."

"Well, you must give me a few days to see what plans I can make."

"How many days do you want?"

"It may take a week."

"I can't hang around this neighborhood a week."

"You needn't. You can go back to New York and I'll telegraph you when to come with the money if I decide to go into the job."

"What's the matter with you coming to New York and seeing the three of us at our hotel?"

"I can do that. What hotel are you chaps stoppin' at?"

"The Castle Square."

Joe, who had taken in every word up to that point, made a mental note of the name of the hotel.

"Whereabouts is it?"

"It's not far from the Grand Central depot, where you'll land. Take a cab and tell the driver where you want to go, and he'll land you all right for half a dollar."

"All right. You may expect to see me before next Saturday."

"We'll look for you. Mind, we depend upon you. If you want to keep in with our set in town you've got to do the right thing. If the chappies turned your roadhouse down as a meeting-place, it would make a lot of difference in your prosperity."

Whether Crandall intended his remark as a covert threat or not, the ex-prizefighter took it as such. He knew that if the young sports of Darien went back on him, he might as well shut up shop, for it was their custom that made the roadhouse pay, and pay well. Therefore, he hastened to assure Crandall that he would try and do the right thing by him and his two companions in exile.

That terminated the interview, and Hathaway and the disguised dude left the haunted house.

CHAPTER XIII.—On the Express.

"Well," said Tom Taylor, after Hathaway and Crandall had left the sitting-room and the house, "what were those men saying that interested you so much?"

"Want to know, real bad?" asked Joe.

"I'd like to."

"They were talking about me."

"About you? Go on, you're kidding me."

"No, I'm not. You'll never guess who the fellow with the whiskers was."

"How could I, when I never saw him before?"

"Oh, you've seen him before."

"I tell you I haven't. He was a perfect stranger to me."

"How can he be a stranger when you've often seen him in the yard of the works?"

"Don't remember ever seeing him there," replied Taylor, positively.

"You didn't recognize him on account of his whiskers. They were false."

"False!" cried Tom, in surprise.

"Exactly. That man was Arthur Crandall, disguised."

"You don't mean it," replied Tom, much astonished.

"I do mean it."

"How did you recognize him?"

"I didn't until Hathaway addressed him by name."

"Well, that beats the deck. So he's disguised in order not to be recognized around here. It's a

pretty good disguise, all right. I never would have known him."

"Yes, it deceived me, too."

"You say he and Hathaway were talking about you?"

"Yes."

"What were they saying?"

"Plotting against me."

"Gee! Figuring on doing you up some way?"

"Crandall has agreed to raise \$10,000 and hand it over to Hathaway if he will kidnap and carry me off to some place from which I won't be able to get back for a long time."

"There is nothing funny about that for you."

"I should say not."

"What are you going to do about it? See the police?"

"I've learned where Crandall's two friends are in hiding at this moment."

"Where?"

"I'd rather keep that dark for the present. Crandall means to rejoin them right away, and Hathaway has promised to meet the three next week at the hotel they are stopping at. We will hurry back to town, as I want to try and have Crandall arrested before he can get out of Darien. He'll probably take the express that stops here at eight o'clock. I'll take a detective to the station and point him out. That will fix him."

"How about the other two?"

"I'll have the chief of police cause their arrest by telegraph, then if they refuse to come voluntarily, the district attorney will have to get out requisition papers."

"Then they're in another State?"

"They are."

"I'll bet they're in New York, then, for that is just the place those chaps would go to."

"I won't say whether they are or not. Come, get a move on."

They left the house, mounted their wheels and started at a rattling pace for town. On reaching the Staple's cottage the two friends parted, Tom riding on to his own home, while Joe rushed into the house to see Mr. Staples. The foreman was reading a magazine in the sitting-room, while Mrs. Staples, assisted by Kittie, was beginning to prepare supper.

"Mr. Staples, sorry to disturb you, but I want to tell you something very important," said Joe.

"I'm at your service, Joe," said the foreman.

"Tom and I were out at the haunted house. While we were on the premises two men came there, one of whom was Hathaway, the ex-prize-fighter. The other was Arthur Crandall."

"That so?" replied Mr. Staples, with a look of interest. "So he's had the nerve to come back. That means that he intends to face the music."

"Not at all. He came back disguised for a certain purpose."

Joe then told Mr. Staples about the interview he had overheard between Crandall and Hathaway. The foreman was greatly astonished.

"That Hathaway is no doubt rascal enough to undertake such a job for the money that is in it. It is lucky you heard about the scheme. Forewarned is forearmed, you know."

"Crandall will probably take the eight o'clock express for New York this evening. An effort must be made to arrest him at the station. Brett and Otis are stopping at the Castle Square Hotel

in New York. We must have them arrested by telegraph. It is my opinion that to save themselves from a stay in the Tombs they will consent to return without requisition papers. Will you accompany me to police headquarters now?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Staples.

When they reached headquarters Joe stated the case to the officer in charge. He consented to send a detective with the boy to the station to arrest Crandall. He also promised to telegraph to the New York authorities a request for the arrest of Brett and Otis, with instructions to hold the prisoners until arrangements were made to bring them to Darien. Joe and Mr. Staples then returned home for supper. They had hardly finished it before the detective detailed to go to the station with the young mechanic, rang the bell. It wasn't quite seven o'clock, so they had plenty of time before them. Joe and the sleuth walked leisurely to the railroad station, arriving about half an hour ahead of time. There were only two or three people in the waiting-room. Additions dropped in by degrees, but at five minutes of eight, Crandall had not put in his appearance. Finally the whistle of the express was heard, and still the bird they were after was not in sight. Joe began to doubt if he was going by that train.

"Maybe he went to his uncle's home and intends to wait till the midnight express," he said to the detective.

The sleuth shrugged his shoulders almost indifferently. Just then the express from Boston rolled in, with three Pullman cars attached. Joe and the detective moved down the platform toward the drawing-room cars, for sleeping-cars were not needed on this train, which was due in New York at eleven. Nearly all the passengers got aboard of the regular coaches, and so Joe and the officer had an unobstructed view of the Pullmans. There was no sign of Arthur Crandall with his whiskers.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and then signalled the engineer to proceed.

The bell began to ring, the steam hissed into the cylinders, and the train started with a hoarse "puff, puff" from the locomotive smoke-stack. At that instant a man dashed from behind the side of the station, crossed the platform with a bound, and sprang on the rear platform of the last Pullman. It was Arthur Crandall, whiskers and all, and Joe spotted him at once.

"There he is," he shouted to the detective, bounding forward.

Catching the platform rail as the car glided by, Joe swung himself up and landed alongside of the disguised dude. Before Crandall dreamed of what was coming, the young mechanic threw himself upon him and bore him down on the platform.

"What in thunder——" began the secretary of the works.

Joe reached for his false whiskers and tore them from his face.

"Better give up, Crandall, for I've got you dead to rights," he said, exultantly.

"Joe Warner!" ejaculated the young man, with a smothered imprecation.

In another moment the pair were struggling for the mastery on the rear platform of the Pullman, while the express, rapidly gaining momentum, speeded away into the night, leaving the lights of Darien far behind.

CHAPTER XIV.—Joe Gets His Man at Last.

"Confound you!" roared Crandall. "I'll throw you from the train."

"I don't think you will," replied Joe, coolly. "Better give up."

"Give up, you measly mechanic!" gritted the dude secretary. "I see myself yielding to you. Think you'll capture me, eh? Not if I know it."

Nothing more was said by either for a minute while they struggled about on the platform in no small danger of slipping off the car. Joe maintained his early advantage of a seat astride Crandall's chest, and the latter could not shake him off.

"If you won't give in I'll hold you down till the train reaches the next stopping place," said Joe, in a tone that showed determination.

"I'll see if you do," snarled Crandall, renewing his struggles. By a quick move the dude partly got rid of Joe's weight and threw him against the end of the car. The shock momentarily dazed the plucky boy, and Crandall took immediate advantage of the fact to dump Joe over on his back. Then, exerting all his energies, he shoved the young mechanic down the steps intending to throw him off the car. Joe, however, recovered in time to grab him by the coat. The boy's weight pulled Crandall forward and both tumbled off into the black void alongside the train. Under ordinary circumstances both would probably have been killed, for the train was running at a fifty-mile clip at that moment; but it happened that the car was shooting over a short viaduct that spanned a narrow, but deep stream, and they fell from the side close to the outer edge of the masonry. Joe cleared the stonework by a hair, pulling Crandall after him. A dive of nearly twelve feet landed them both in the rushing stream and they went under. Contact with the water caused Joe to release his hold on the secretary, and when they came to the surface they were yards apart. The young mechanic struck out for the bank, which he could see outlined against the clear sky, and after a fierce struggle with the stream, succeeded in reaching the shore and climbing out to solid ground. He felt so exhausted that he had to lie down and rest. What had become of Crandall he had not the slightest idea.

"I thought I had him sure, but that is where I fooled myself," muttered Joe, and he lay on the bank in his wet garments and blinked up at the stars. "I wonder where he is now? Drowned perhaps, if he couldn't swim, or ashore on this bank or the other, if luck came to his aid. In any case I've lost him, and will have to hoof it to the nearest house, and beg the hospitality of the occupants."

He rose to his feet and looked around. He saw the glow of a switch red light in the near distance and knew that marked the line of the railroad. There were white lights here and there in the opposite direction, and Joe judged they shone from the windows of houses. Toward the nearest of these he made his way at a swinging gait, stamping his feet down hard and flapping his arms to keep up the circulation of his blood. In a short time he reached a small house standing close to the stream. His loud knock brought a woman to the door.

"I've been in the river, or whatever you call

it, and I'm wet to the skin," said the boy. "Can I stay here till my clothes are dried?"

"Come right in," said the woman, promptly. "You'll get your death standing outside in your soaked garments."

Joe gladly accepted her invitation.

"How did you fall into the stream?" she asked, inquisitively.

"Fell off the end platform of the Boston express."

"Fell from the express!" ejaculated the woman, in a tone of great astonishment.

"Yes, ma'am. The next thing I knew I was in the water."

"What an escape you had!" she exclaimed.

"I guess it was a pretty narrow one. I swam ashore, walked down in this direction and here I am, feeling pretty good, all things considered."

The woman got a lamp and led Joe upstairs to a small room, where she told him to take off his clothes and roll himself up in the blankets.

"I'll bring you a hot drink presently, and then you'll come around all right."

She was as good as her word, and by the time Joe was beginning to warm up in the blankets, she brought him a steaming hot whiskey. She took his clothes down to the kitchen, started a good fire and hung his apparel up to dry. Joe had never drunk whiskey before, but he was prevailed on to take the hot toddy, as the woman called it, for his health's sake, to drive out the chill and put him into a perspiration. The drink had the immediate effect of making him drowsy, and he was soon in a deep slumber from which he did not awake till broad daylight next morning. He found his clothes, dried and pressed, on a chair beside the bed all ready for him to put on. When he walked downstairs the woman's husband met him in the hall, and invited him into the room where breakfast was waiting to be served up. After the meal he thanked his host and hostess, and told them just how he came to be in the predicament of the night before. They directed him to a station three miles down the road, and he took leave of them. Still ignorant of Arthur Crandall's fate, he walked rapidly down the road to catch the 9.10 local, east, which would stop at Darien. The west-bound local was due at the station fifteen minutes earlier. Joe bought a ticket for Darien, which was the next stop, eight miles east. When he stepped out on the platform the local, bound for New York, was coming in to the station, and among the passengers waiting to board it he spied Crandall, without his whiskers, but looking none the worse for his fall from the train and ducking. The young mechanic stepped up to him as he put his foot on the car-step and grabbing him by the arm, said:

"You're taking the wrong train, Crandall. You'll have to go back to Darien."

The young man started back with an imprecation, and tried to shake the boy off. Joe, however, had expected trouble, and held on to him with all his strength. The tussle that ensued attracted general attention as a matter of course, and brought the conductor up.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded, sharply.

"This man is wanted by the Darien police, and must go back to that town. He is trying to escape to New York," said Joe.

"It's a lie!" cried Crandall. "This young rascal ought to be arrested for assaulting me."

"What authority have you for detaining this gentleman?" asked the conductor of Joe.

"I have no authority, but I'm going to hold him just the same. I've told you the truth, and if you interfere you'll get into trouble. A telegraph message to the Darien police department will prove what I have said is so," replied the boy, in a resolute tone.

"Well, it's none of my business," replied the conductor, not able to decide upon the merits of the case. Settle it between yourselves."

He gave the signal to go ahead to the engineer, and sprang aboard the train, which pulled out at once, leaving Crandall struggling with the boy, both surrounded by a small crowd whose sympathies were about evenly divided. Finally the station-master came out and inquired into the cause of the trouble. Joe told him the facts, which the crowd listened to, and which Crandall vigorously denied, threatening to sue the railroad company. As the boy could show no authority for detaining Crandall, the station-master ordered him to release the young man.

"I won't do it," replied Joe.

"Then I'll call a policeman to decide the matter."

The station-master telephoned for one of the town officers, but long before he arrived the east-bound local came in. The conductor of the east-bound train came up to inquire into the trouble. It happened that he knew Crandall by sight, and remembered reading about the attempted abduction of Miss Staples by the dude and his two friends. So when Joe stated his side of the case he got the conductor's support at once. Crandall put up a stiff kick, and again threatened to sue the railroad company if the official interfered. The conductor, however, believed Joe's statements that Crandall was wanted in Darien, and he called a brakeman up and ordered him to help Joe put the young man on the train. Crandall renewed his fight for liberty, but he stood no show now, and was quickly bundled into the car and the train started. Joe paid the conductor the quarter which was the fare for Crandall to Darien, and with the help of the brakeman, stood guard over the prisoner till he was hustled out on the Darien platform. It was all up with the young man now, for several people identified him at the station. A policeman was summoned from the street and Crandall was marched to headquarters, accompanied by Joe.

CHAPTER XV.—Joe Asks Kittie the All-Important Question.

Crandall, before he was taken to a cell, sent word to his uncle to come and bail him out. Joe, after leaving headquarters, went home to change his Sunday clothes for his working habiliments. Mrs. Staples and Kittie greeted his appearance with satisfaction. The latter had worried a good part of the night over his unexplained absence. He quickly told his story, recounting with not a little exultation, how he had finally succeeded in landing Crandall in jail. Kittie's admiration for his nerve and pluck increased a hundred per cent. As soon as Joe finished his story he hurried away to the shop where he had to repeat his night and morning's experience to Mr. Staples, and later on,

during the noon hour, he told the workmen who did not go out to lunch.

As Arthur Crandall was decidedly unpopular in the machine shop, as well as all over the establishment, Joe's exploit met with general approval. Crandall's uncle got him out on a thousand dollars bail, and after vowing that he would get square with Joe Warner, whom he tried in vain to get his uncle to discharge from the works, he took a late afternoon train for New York. When he reached the Castle Square Hotel he was astonished and disgusted to learn that Brett and Otis had been arrested on a telegraphed order from Darien, and taken to the Tombs. As it was impossible for him to see them at that hour, he took his dinner by himself in the hotel dining-room.

Next morning he went to the Tombs to call on his associates, and found that they had voluntarily gone back to Darien on a late train the day previous, and he had probably passed them on the road. As there was nothing to keep him in New York now, he returned himself to Darien and found Brett and Otis out on bail. A month later the three were tried for the crime of attempted abduction and were convicted, in spite of the efforts of Lawyer Otis in their behalf. Crandall was sentenced to five years in the State prison, and Brett and Otis to one year each. The fathers of Brett and Otis succeeded in getting the judge to suspend sentence in their behalf, and they were released.

Mr. Crandall appealed his nephew's case, and the young man got out on bail, pending the decision of the Appellate Court. Joe, on Mr. Staples' advice, consulted the district attorney about the conversation he had overheard between Crandall and Hathaway at the haunted house, stating that as the former had sworn to get square with him, he feared some conspiracy might be hatched up against him between the two men, and put into effect by Hathaway.

"If they were to be arrested, nothing could be proved against them on your uncorroborated testimony. You ought to have taken advantage of your friend's presence in the house to have had him listen as well as yourself. As the case stands, all he would be able to swear to, is the fact that the two men held an interview in the house that day. However, as I am satisfied you have told me nothing but the truth, I'll send for both Hathaway and young Crandall, tell them that I have evidence tending to show that they contemplated getting you out of the way, and I will warn them that if anything crooked happens to you they will be immediately arrested on suspicion of being implicated in the matter. That will no doubt bring them to their senses."

The district attorney carried out his purpose, and though both Hathaway and the secretary disavowed ever having had any intention of harming the young mechanic, the official gave them to understand that he didn't believe their denial, and warned them to mind their p's and q's. They took the hint and Joe was not molested by either after that. Crandall eventually got a new trial on the ground that the evidence did not warrant the sentence he had received. He was convicted again, and sentenced to two years this time. His friends succeeded in influencing the judge to suspend sentence, and he was permitted to go free.

At the end of a year Brett and Otis got their

sentences quashed, as nothing had been brought against them during that time. Crandall expected to have his fixed the same way when his time was out, and he took care to behave himself in order to reach that desired result. In the meantime Joe Warner was rapidly becoming an expert mechanic. He was also giving a portion of his time to the engineering problem which had stumped Parks—that is an improved condenser. Soon after his nineteenth birthday he passed his examination before a board of engineers and received a license as a stationary engineer. Six months later he passed another examination and received a certificate similar to a diploma, which stated that in the opinion of the board he was qualified to run the highest grade of stationary engines, like the Corliss and such types.

Joe, however, had no intention of availing himself of this advantage, as he meant to become a king-pin mechanic, and then grade himself up to some big job in that line, such as superintendent of a big shop employing hundreds of hands. His general knowledge of engineering was bound to help him to reach the desired goal, and he kept improving himself in that line right along so as not to grow rusty. He had really no idea of ever running an engine for a living, but he wanted to understand the better class of engines so well that he could superintend taking one apart and putting it together again, down to the smallest detail.

He now considered himself fully qualified to tackle the problem of improving the condenser, though he was by no means sure that the dream of Parks could be realized. Still the idea appealed to him, because it had been in his mind ever since the day Parks' model came into his possession. He experimented only during a part of his spare time, and months went by before his scheming bore any encouraging fruit. The friendship between Joe and Kittie, begun on the day he got his job at the machine shop of the Crandall Works, kept on growing stronger and stronger as time elapsed. Their attachment was so plain to the girl's parents that the foreman and his wife considered it a foregone conclusion that Joe would ask them for their Kittie some day in the near future.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Staples had often remarked that no man living was quite good enough for their daughter, still they marked the progress of Joe's quiet courtship with considerable satisfaction. They looked upon Joe as a most unusual boy, and were prepared to make an exception in his favor. Living right in the family, they had a line on the young mechanic all the time, and could not find the slightest fault with him. Indeed, Mrs. Staples had come to think almost as much of Joe as though he were her own son, and she made no bones about saying as much both to her husband and Kittie.

"On the whole, I wouldn't ask for a better husband for Kittie than Joe," remarked Mr. Staples one evening to his wife. "He possesses all the qualities I admire in a young man, and if he lives he will make a name and a competence for himself."

Mrs. Staples agreed with her husband, and they looked forward to their daughter's future without the slightest misgiving. One night Joe took Kittie to one of the theatres to see a New York success that had come to town for a week stand. Love was the predominant feature of the play,

and both Joe and Kittie were much impressed by the trials and tribulations of the virtuous hero in his efforts to win the beautiful but coy heroine. When they came out after the show, they could talk of nothing else but the play, and instead of taking a car part of the way to their home they walked. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and when they got into the quiet residential streets Joe became more confidential than usual. After going over his plans for the future, as he had already done many times before with the girl, he said:

"I suppose you intend to marry some day, Kittie?"

"I suppose so, if I can find anybody to have me."

"Don't you know anybody who would be glad to have such a treasure as you are?"

"No-o," replied the girl slowly, which was a big fib, for she knew, as well as any girl in her shoes could know, that Joe would propose some day to her, and that she meant to accept him.

"You don't know?" said the young mechanic, a trifle disappointed in her reply.

She struck her head and looked down, but her manner belied her words.

"Isn't there somebody you think a whole lot of?"

"Why, of course—mother and father."

"Isn't there somebody else?"

"Well, I think a lot of you, too," she replied slowly.

"How much?"

"Oh, a lot."

"Do you think as much of me as I do of you?"

"I don't know how much you think of me."

"Oh, come now, you do."

"How much do you think of me?" she asked, almost saucily.

"I think more of you than anybody else in the world. I think so much of you that I want you to be my wife some day. There, I've said it now. Will you?"

"Do you really mean that, Joe?"

"I do. Don't you believe me?"

"Yes, I believe anything you say."

"And may I ask your father and mother if I can have you?"

"Yes," she answered softly.

"Then you love me as I love you?"

"I do, with all my heart."

Joe's heart jumped with delight. She loved him and he was thoroughly happy. And so was Kittie happy, for Joe had declared himself at last.

CHAPTER XVI.—Rising to Fame and Fortune.

A few days later Joe summoned up courage enough to ask Mr. Staples the momentous question—could he have Kittie?

"So you want to marry our Kittie, eh?"

"I do, the worst way."

"Well, you go and ask Mrs. Staples, Joe. Whatever she says goes."

So the young mechanic hunted Kittie's mother up and told her that he wanted Kittie.

"Have you asked Mr. Staples?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Told me to ask you. That whatever you said went."

"Well, Joe, Kittie is our only child, and her

father and I think there isn't another girl in the world like her."

"That's right," nodded the boy. "I think the same."

"Naturally we're particular about the person she selects as a husband."

"Well, how do I fill the bill?" asked Joe, a bit anxiously.

"I don't know anybody I would sooner give her to than you, Joe. So you can have her with our blessing, for I know you will make her a good husband."

In a few days Joe took Kittie to a jewelry store and she picked out an engagement ring, the price of which came within his means. A few days later Joe, while making an experiment in connection with his idea of an improvement in the condenser, suddenly realized that he had accidentally found out a way to utilize a larger percentage of the wasted steam than was in use anywhere. It was a known fact that by far the greater proportion of the units of steam went to waste, consequently any discovery which would serve to utilize a larger number of those particles of condensed vapor would prove of untold value in economizing coal consumption. Joe knew the value of his new discovery, and he lost no time in assuring himself that it could be put to practical use.

He got permission from the engineer of the works to attach his invention to the big boiler in the outhouse adjoining the engine-room. Careful data was kept of the results achieved, and it was found that the boy's apparatus enabled the boiler to supply the usual amount of steam necessary to run the engine at regulation speed with one-third less fuel than was required when his attachment was not in use. As soon as this fact was demonstrated beyond a doubt, Joe had drawings made of his invention and applied for a patent. Owing to its great importance it was pushed by the patent attorneys, and a patent secured at the earliest possible date.

A full illustrated description of this valuable discovery was immediately published by a well-known scientific paper, published in New York. Inside of a few days letters began coming to Joe from people who were desirous of securing an interest in his patent. Mr. Staples, who had made up his mind that his prospective son-in-law had made one of the most important discoveries of the age, advised Joe to go slow about disposing of any share of his invention. Before the boy had considered seriously any of the propositions submitted to him, he was called upon by the representative of a manufacturing establishment of national reputation located near Pittsburgh.

The firm in question wanted to secure the exclusive rights to manufacture and put Joe's invention on the market, and its representative was authorized to offer the young mechanic a royalty that was bound to make him very rich in a short time. Joe's attorneys had made arrangements to take out patents in every civilized country on the face of the globe, so that the boy should secure the exclusive rights of his valuable invention. The field to be covered was so large that only an establishment like the Pittsburgh house could hope to supply the demand within anything like a reasonable time after the invention was actually put on the market. Owing to the fact that Joe's invention had first demonstrated its usefulness and

value on the boiler of his establishment, Mr. Crandall took a great deal of interest in the boy's success. When he heard about the offer submitted by the Pittsburgh firm, he called the young mechanic into his office and advised him by all means to accept it, as the responsibility and reputation of the house were a sufficient guarantee that he would be fairly dealt with, while the resources of the establishment were such that the invention could not only be rapidly turned out, but quickly marketed.

"Had the firm made you a flat offer of a million for your American patent alone, I should have advised you to refuse it, for the royalty basis offers you far larger returns. When you have secured your foreign patents I should advise you to hold on to them also, and let the Pittsburgh house supply the world. You will not only add to your own income by so doing, but help American trade and the American workman," said Mr. Crandall.

"I will follow your advice, Mr. Crandall," replied Joe, "and at the same time I thank you for the interest you show in me."

"You are welcome, Warner. And to show you that this interest is no sham I will, if you so desire, make it my business to see that you get every advantage in the agreement you have decided to make with the Pittsburgh house."

The unexpected results which had come to Joe through his experimenting with Parks' chimerical idea of an absolute vacuum in the condenser, changed the whole course of the boy's future. After signing the documents with the Pittsburgh company, there no longer existed any reason for him doing another stroke of manual labor during the rest of his life. Inside of the year, while his invention was coming into general use as fast as the great resources of the Pittsburgh concern could put it out, his name became known in every important country in the world. When the young mechanic asked Kittie to name the day for their marriage, her mother, whom she consulted, said to her:

"Kittie, you have won a prize in the matrimonial lottery. You will ultimately be able to live in the finest house in this town, whether it be in Bradhurst Avenue or anywhere else. You will be able to buy the most expensive gowns of any of our society ladies. In fact you will be able to command all the luxuries that a millionaire husband can give you. You were certainly born under a lucky star."

Three months later Joe and Kittie were married, and every newspaper in town considered the event of sufficient general interest to lay it before its readers. At the conclusion of their honeymoon, Joe and his bride took possession of the new home he had had built and furnished for their accommodation. At his particular request, Mr. and Mrs. Staples went to live with them, his father-in-law retiring from the foremanship of the machine shop, and becoming a gentleman of leisure, which his long years of service justly entitled him to. As time passed, Joe's wealth rapidly increased, and it was not so long before he was in a financial position to sign his check for a million had he wanted to do so.

Next week's issue will contain "BANKER BARRY'S BOY; OR, GATHERING THE DOLLARS IN WALL STREET."



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TURNED AWAY

— OR —

A BOY IN SEARCH OF HIS NAME

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

There was a terrible flash, and Clif saw Tom leap upon the quarter-deck and cross to the cockpit.

At the same moment he saw that there was no one at the wheel.

He got his footing just then, released his hold on the captain's collar, assisted him to his feet, and said:

"Man at the wheel disabled, sir. That's what sent us off. Tom Brown has gone to the wheel. You can depend on him, sir."

"H'm! was it you who grabbed me by the collar?" growled the man.

"Yes, sir."

"What did you do it for?"

"To keep you from going overboard, sir."

"H'm! and I would have gone, sure enough! But what did you want to do it for? I'm a smuggler, a thief, you say. What business had you to save a man like that?"

"If I had let you go when I could have saved you, sir," said Clif, firmly, "I would have been worse than a thief. I would have been a murderer."

"H'm!" muttered the man, and going upon the quarter-deck he looked at the sky and the sails, and then at Tom, and shouted:

"Can you hold her?"

"Yes, sir."

"Keep her as she is. Want any help?"

"No. She goes all right."

"Good enough. Anybody else there?"

"No, sir. I guess he's been washed overboard. don't see him, but there's something wet and warm on the spokes."

"Blood, most likely," said Clif. "The man lost his hold and the spokes flew around and brained him, no doubt."

"H'm!" Clif heard the skipper mutter, and then he called:

"Rope off that hole in the rail and stretch life lines. There's no making the Grigiron tonight in this gale."

"Not unless you want to leave all our bones on it," Clif heard Jock, the mulatto steward, say, almost in his ear.

Clif worked with the others, while Tom remained at the wheel, and the schooner drove on under greatly reduced sail, everything she had up being closely reefed.

At four bells, or two o'clock in the morning, Tom was relieved at the wheel, one of the seamen taking his place, when he came and joined Clif in the waist.

Hot coffee was served out to the men at the galley, which was presided over by a small, very black and smiling negro, who wore big hoops in

his ears, and had a big red and yellow silk handkerchief tied loosely about his neck, exposing his throat and chest, which looked strong and sinewy.

"You like dis hooker, you tink?" he asked Clif as he handed the boy a pint pot of coffee. "You stay with cap'n, you tink?"

"I don't know," said Clif, no wishing to commit himself.

"You make heap money, some time, all same you spend him very fas', too. Cap'n very good man when he make plenty money, bad when he no make him."

"Then he doesn't always make money?"

"No; sometimes him lose, sometimes customer no show up, sometimes Custom House man look too sharp, try catch him, den him had throw ting overboard."

"I see," said Clif. "On the whole, there's a great deal of risk and not much profit in the business."

"Dat so; but no tell cap'n. He be mad, throw ting, cuss, stamp around, hit somebody, mebbe shoot. You more better stay in ship."

"Yes; but if I can't bring myself to——"

"Den watch your chance to get away some time," said the cook, who was called Dolf, lowering his voice as Jock, the steward appeared.

"Yes, thanks, I think the young lady might like some," said Clif, walking away from the galley with the pot in his hand.

The wind continued to blow with great velocity, and the schooner drove on before it, the captain remaining on the quarter-deck watching the sea, the sky, and the sails, now turning to the helmsman to give directions, now shouting some orders to the men on deck.

He had not said anything to Clif after the incident on the main deck, and the boy remained ready to be called in case he was needed, but had very little to do, as there were many hands, no one having gone below.

They ran on until daybreak, the storm abating not the least in its violence, and then, all of a sudden, Clif heard the sound of breakers ahead of them, and saw, appearing dimly through the sea mists, a line of black rocks, and, beyond, a range of hills.

The captain peered from under the brim of his sou'wester, and then, seeing Clif standing by the mainmast, called to him.

"Take the wheel," he said, as the boy came upon the quarter-deck. "I'm not going to run upon those rocks, but I want a steady hand and a clear head to help me. Follow my directions, and we'll be all right. It's a difficult passage to the harbor I'm making, but you saved my life once, and I guess I can trust you now."

Clif took the wheel in silence, and Hazeltine, standing just behind him, gave the word to steer straight for the tallest of the bleak rocks in front of them.

Clif obeyed, and yet it seemed to him as if they were rushing right to their doom.

CHAPTER VIII.

In The Smuggler's Hiding-Place.

Hazeltine stood immovable at Clif's side, seeming in no wise affected by their apparent danger.

"When I speak," he said, quietly, "come up a point or two, but not till then, and don't be afraid of nothin'. I ain't a-goin' on the rocks."

On they rushed until it seemed as if in another instant they would go dashing upon the black rocks at the base of which the waters surged and boiled.

"Now," said the captain, and Clif began to alter his course.

The vessel swung about rapidly, and in a moment they were gliding past the black rock.

"Enough! Steady! As you go!"

Clif held the vessel on her new course, and the captain said no more to him for some little time, and when he did he spoke in low tones, inaudible beyond the cockpit.

Now and then he roared out orders to the men on the main deck, calling to them to ease the jib or to lower or to raise it, the men acting on the instant, although with no evident fear that they were going to be wrecked.

Past one black rock and another, now through a channel so narrow that it seemed as if they must be nipped, now so close to some bare rock that the boy could have dropped a stone upon it, now seeming to be caught in an eddy which would rend them apart, then apparently about to run straight upon a shoal, but escaping all these dangers by a swift turn of the wheel, the schooner continued on her tortuous way, Clif doing exactly as he was told, and Hazeltine standing unmoved by his side.

At last they ran in between two great green hills, following a narrow channel which seemed to end at the foot of a giant gray bluff which descended sheer to the water.

The bluff seemed to block the way completely, for Clif could not see the slightest opening, and was positive that there was none.

However, he had seen so many strange things during the passage that he ceased to wonder, and simply stood there, executing one order until another should be given him.

The channel was not wide enough for the vessel to turn around in, and there appeared to be no way out in either direction.

Suddenly, however, when the bowsprit was about to touch the rocks, the captain said:

"Hard down till I tell you. Then let go and look out not to get hit by the flying spokes."

Clif jammed the wheel hard down and held it there.

In an instant the schooner was swung to starboard, and to Clif's surprise he entered another passage, the existence of which he had not dreamed, and glided on, carried along by a swift current until he saw an opening ahead of him, and then a considerable expanse of water.

"Let go!" said the skipper.

Clif loosed his hold in an instant and jumped back.

The spokes flew around like lightning, and in a few moments the schooner came to rest in an almost circular basin of smooth water, the sails were lowered, the anchor dropped, and they were in their harbor.

"There!" said Hazeltine, with a sigh of relief. "Now you may go below and get a rest. We are safe from storm or pursuers here. You've done well, son. You didn't lose your head, an' you done just what you was told. It ain't every one that can do that."

Clif crossed the quarter-deck, and as he descended the companion-ladder to the main deck, looked around him.

In front, at a distance of two or three hundred yards, was a stretch of smooth white beach running back at a gentle slope for about fifty feet, and beyond this a clump of trees among which he could see several neat white cottages.

To the right of the beach were rocks and shingle, and to the left bluffs, gray and ragged, and descending sheer to the water's edge.

"A snug hiding-place, this," the boy mused, "and one into which none not knowing its whereabouts could ever hope to follow. Now that I am here the question is, shall I ever get out?"

During the forenoon, after he had eaten and slept, Clif came out on deck and saw Ada and her father standing by the rail, looking toward the beach, Tom sitting on a bitt not far away.

"They've been taking stuff ashore," said the boy. "They got a storehouse there. I wonder if they're going to store us? The cap'n said we'd go ashore pretty soon."

"I don't know, I'm sure. This is the strangest place I ever saw."

"I think I could take the ship in," said Tom, "but I wonder if it's the same way out? I watched you while you was at the wheel. Maybe we could get out if we had a boat."

"You don't know what the captain intends doing with us, I suppose?" asked Ada. "There is no real reason for our being kept prisoners, is there?"

"It seems a very curious place," said Mr. Kidder before Clif could answer. "I think I would enjoy exploring it if I could have a boat. I am sorry I wrecked Captain Peter's boat yesterday, but I was so interested that I forgot all about the time and that the locality was unfamiliar to me. The tide was tremendously strong, too. I wonder if it was as strong as that at the time of the wreck?"

Clif looked puzzled, and Ada said, quietly:

"Father is thinking of a wreck that happened several years ago, and in which he takes a great interest."

Before Clif could answer the steward came up and said:

"Cap'n says you can go ashore if you like. He tink you like dat better dan stay here. De boat go right away soon if you like go dere."

"By all means," said the old gentleman. "I shall enjoy it very much. Ada, dear, will you get me my hat and cane?"

"They were lost, father, when we were thrown on the rocks."

"Oh, yes, to be sure," said Mr. Kidder, smiling. "I forgot it. Well, I shall have to go without or find others."

"I'll get you a hat an' stick," said Jock. "You want to go walkin' or in de boat, me go wif you. Me s'pect stay on shore two, tree days, mebbey long time. Me got plenty time for lady and fader."

"Thank you," said Kidder. "I shall like very much to explore the coast. I am looking for a wreck. A ship went down, and I am looking for it."

Ada looked distressed, and presently turned the conversation into other channels, and Clif who saw her look, helped her in this.

They went ashore in a short time, Jock going with them, and two sailors rowing.

They met Hazeltine on the beach, and after greeting them somewhat shortly, he said:

"Jock'll show the young lady the house where she and her father will stop. You boys can have the one next to it with Jock and one o' the men. The storm hain't blown itself out yet, and we won't be goin' away at once. It'll be better here than aboard the hooker, so make yourselves comfortable and go about as much as you like."

Clif saw a look in the captain's face as he said this which convinced him that the man did not mean that they should escape, no matter how fair-spoken he was.

For all that he meant to make the most of any chance that there might be, although he said:

"Thank you, captain. This seems a pleasant place, and we will try and enjoy ourselves."

During the afternoon Clif and Tom strolled through the woods and along the beach, Ada and her father being with Jock in the boat, or scrambling about among the rocks.

The two boys were provided with bunks in the little house next to that occupied by the Kidders, and, after supper, being pretty well worn out, went to bed shortly after dark.

Clif fell asleep at once, but awoke just before daybreak, and not caring to sleep any more, arose, dressed himself, and went out, thinking he would take a swim before breakfast.

As he left the woods and came out upon the beach he saw that the moon was almost to the top of the hills behind him, and then, looking out upon the water, saw that the schooner was missing.

"H'm; that's strange," he murmured. "I wonder if they've gone or are simply secreted in some other part of this strange place?"

At that moment Tom came out of the woods.

"They've gone," he said. "And they went out different from what they came in. There's one way in and another out."

"As I feared," said Clif. "Well, for all that, I'll find the way out."

CHAPTER IX.

A Moment Too Late.

All that day Clif saw very little of Ada except at a distance.

The steward remained with the girl and her father almost constantly, and much of the time they were out in the boat.

Clif and Tom roamed over the hills unrestrained, but when they wished to take a boat there was none to be had, or the men told them that it was too near dinner-time, or that they wanted it themselves, or gave one or another excuse for not giving it to them.

During the first day they climbed the highest hill they could scale, and then Clif ascended the tallest tree to be found there.

"This place is an island, Tom," he said, when he came down. "I can see the ocean on all sides, and, far away to the north, land. That's the main, I suppose."

The next day the two boys, by much climbing and having to make a considerable detour, man-

aged to reach the top of the bluff to the left of the beach, and walked along it for a considerable distance.

From here they had a better view than on the previous day, and saw more clearly that they were on an island.

After a time Clif noticed that the sun was getting low, and suggested that they go down before darkness overtook them.

"Hallo!" said Tom, as they were about to leave, pointing out to sea. "What's that? It looks to me like the schooner."

"So it is," said Clif. "Hazeltine is returning. I wish he had staid away a day or two longer. Then we might have got away. He will have to hurry to get in before dark. He seems a long way off yet."

The boys were off the bluff by sunset, but it was nearly dark when they reached the beach and saw the schooner lying at anchor in the basin.

Two or three boats came ashore, and the men began to enjoy themselves, drinking and carousing and making a great deal of noise.

The boats were drawn up on the beach and left without guards, and at length, when it was quite dark, Clif said to Tom:

"If we could get one of the boats we might be able to leave. Do you think you could tell the place where the schooner went out?"

"I guess so," said Tom. "Anyhow, we could try."

"I'll see Ada and tell her to remain awake. With these fellows carousing there will be no great watch kept, and when everything is quiet we may be able to get away. If there were only you and me there wouldn't be much trouble, but we must not leave Ada and her father among these rough men."

"Ciu'dn't we go away and then come back for them," asked Tom.

"No, I would be afraid to do that. We must take them with us."

A little later Clif saw Ada in front of the cottage, and said:

"It's a lovely evening. Wouldn't you like to take a walk? Your father will be very comfortable alone."

Ada knew by the boy's tone that he had something of importance to communicate, and answered:

"Yes, I would like it very much," and in a few moments the two were walking leisurely along the beach, beyond the reach of any curious ears.

"The men will be all drunk tonight," said Clif, "and it will be a good time to make our escape, as no watch will be kept. If we stay on the schooner there will be no opportunity. Tom thinks he can find the way out, and I think it is worth while to try."

"Tonight?" asked Ada anxiously.

"Yes. There may be risks, but we risk more in staying here. Keep awake, and at the proper moment I will knock on the window of your room. The greatest difficulty, I suppose, will be with your father."

"Yes, for he is well satisfied here. But I will tell him that we are going in the boat. He delights in that and will make no objection."

"Good! Then be ready at any time for the signal. It may be quite late, for I must wait till all is quiet."

(To be continued.)

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 17, 1926

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

SEAPLANES LOCATE SEALS

More than 200,000 seals were killed this season. The unusual success of the season was due mainly to the use of seaplanes in locating the herds.

CHILDREN SPEAK INTUITIVELY

Children understand spoken language by intuition, by a function of the subconscious mind, and not directly by reasoning power and memorizing, declares a British physician, Dr. J. W. Tomb. Dr. Tomb has had opportunities of observing English children in India pick up three Indian vernaculars in addition to the English language, while their parents struggle to master even one dialect.

HALF-MILE AIR TUBE

To provide fresh air for mine headings, a flexible tubing which has an efficient air delivery range of one-half mile from the fan, has been tested by the Bureau of Mines, says Scientific American, and is giving satisfaction in both metal and coal mines.

This tubing is made of a heavy fabric thoroughly impregnated with fungus and acid-resisting compounds. It is light in weight—one man can readily carry 200 feet; and it can be quickly installed—one man in a timbered tunnel can put up over 400 feet in two hours.

SOFTTEST CLOTH KNOWN

Softer than the softest silk or wool, with a pliability greater than any known cloth, is the new material invented by a noted Paris garment designer. It is made, says Popular Science Monthly, from the fluffiest ostrich feathers, which are plucked from the quills, treated by a special process which only the inventor knows, and then woven into a cloth. The finished product is lighter in weight than the finest known and resembles thistledown, after which it is named.

Although it is phenomenally light in weight, it is very durable, and is capable of effects in colors and patterns that are difficult to obtain in the new materials now in common use.

TALL MEN NEED MORE FOOD

If two men are of the same weight, but one of them is short and fat and the other is very tall and thin—which one needs the most food, the most calories? Dr. Takahira of Japan has discovered that the tall, thin man needs many more of the heat-producing calories than does the fat one. It all depends on the total area—not weight—of a person's body. The greater the area the more calories are needed.

Dr. Takahira has devised a formula for finding out what the area of any one's body is. With the aid of some friend who knows algebra, the following formula can be applied, and it can be found pretty near accurate among any given group of men.

The area of the body is equal to $W0.425 \times H0.725 \times 42.46$. "W" here means body weight in kilograms and "H" height of the body in centimeters.

LAUGHS

"I don't like this film." "Why?" "Reminds me too much of my boarding house." "How's that?" "Ten years are supposed to elapse between the first and second reel, and they don't even turn the tablecloth."

Bix—Owens tells me he had a tough time during his vacation. Says he had to borrow money to get home on. Dix—He was in better luck than I was, for I was the man who had to loan it to him.

Teacher—Children, a planet is something we live on. Name another. Abie—My grandfather, he vus a planet! Teacher—Your grandfather? Abie—Shure; ve lived on him fer years!

The Newly-Riches were seated in their handsome drawing-room—Mrs. Newly-Rich at the grand piano, laboriously picking out tunes with one finger. "Hang it all, missus," said Mr. Newly-Rich impatiently, "if I buy you a piano that size I expect you to use both fists!"

Little Girl—Yes, Mrs. Brown, this is my baby brother that the angels brought from heaven. Mrs. Brown—How nice of them! Little Girl—Oh, I don't know. I think they might have kept him there till he was through teething.

Bird Dealer (to customer who has bought a parrot on credit)—Here's your bill. Are you going to pay it or not? Customer—I've had the parrot one whole month and he's never said a word. Bird Dealer—Well, you see, this polly is so sensitive it never speaks until it has seen the receipted bill showing it has been paid for.

Walter Hagen, the noted golfer, said at a dinner in New York: "I used to know a caddie named Crawford, famous for his biting Scotch wit. 'A duffer for whom Crawford was caddy-ing one day asked him what club he should take for a certain shot. 'Take your iron,' said Crawford. 'If I hit it with my iron,' the duffer objected, 'it will go too far.' 'Aye,' said Crawford, 'but ye'll no' hit it.'"

A Tragedy In the Moonlight

By PAUL BRADDON

A shriek, wild and full of horror, rang out upon the stillness of the moonlit night.

It was a woman's voice.

It reached my ears.

I was the guest of Alexander Pryor at his country residence on the Hudson.

Although I was and am a detective, while he was a retired merchant, the friendship of boyhood had remained during the years of our manhood, and we were mutually attached to each other.

Rushing to the window, I looked out.

A thrilling scene was before me.

There in the moonlight I saw Alexander Pryor lying upon the ground, his head supported by his niece, Mabel Stanford, while a few feet distant stood Dudley Forrest, a young man who was a guest at the house.

Hastily flinging on my clothing, I ran downstairs and out of the house.

As I reached the side of Alexander Pryor, Mabel Stanford cried:

"He is dead! He is dead! Oh, my poor uncle has been murdered."

It was so.

The shot that had killed Alexander Pryor must have been fired but a moment or so before she gave the alarm.

Why had I not heard that shot?

"Be calm, miss, and tell me all you know of this awful tragedy," I said.

"Let me speak, sir," said Dudley Forrest, starting forward.

"Go on, sir," I said aloud.

"I will, sir, I will. Mr. Pryor and I were walking up and down the walk discussing a private matter, which was to me of the greatest importance, and so interested were we both that we noted not the lapse of time. Mr. Pryor had just given his consent to a proposition I had made him when he uttered a cry, reeled, and fell dead, shot through the heart, as you see, by a concealed assassin, whom I suspect was concealed behind the bushes yonder. The weapon used by the assassin made no report, and it must have been an air-gun. Miss Mabel rushed from the house as the doomed man fell, and I ran toward the bushes, but saw no one. Returning, I stood dazed and confused, looking upon the victim of this cruel murder as you found me."

Thus Dudley Forrest explained.

"Oh, Dudley, Dudley!" cried Mabel in a familiar way that surprised me. "We must tell Mr. Waters the whole truth. He is a detective, and he may help to capture my uncle's assassin."

"As you will, Mabel," said Dudley Forrest.

"Know, then, Mr. Waters, that three years ago I became engaged to Mr. Forrest, in opposition to my uncle's wishes, for he hated the very name of my affianced, on account of an old family feud, although no one can truthfully say a word against Dudley. I would not marry without the consent of my uncle, who has been both father and mother to me since my parents died in my infancy. So it was agreed that Dudley should go away, and after a few years, if he succeeded in business, he

was to return, make my uncle's acquaintance, and win his friendship. When they had become firm friends the truth was to be revealed, and then, knowing Dudley as he really was, we were sure my uncle would no longer let his prejudice stand in the way of our happiness, and that he would consent to our union. To-night Dudley was to tell my uncle who he was, for we were sure the time for the revelation had come," said Mabel.

"And I did tell him the truth. As we hoped, he freely forgave our innocent deception, and consented that Mabel should become my wife. It was at that very moment that he did this that the fatal shot was fired," said young Forrest.

"And, oh, Mr. Waters, I have a terrible suspicion. One Randolph Morton has been my persistent suitor for two years. He was very jealous of Dudley, and I also know he owed my uncle a considerable sum of money. I suspect that man is the guilty one," Miss Mabel remarked.

By this time the servants of the establishment appeared upon the scene, and my murdered friend was carried into the house, while Dudley Forrest and I set about to search for some trace of the presence of an assassin.

In this we failed.

Next day the news of the murder appeared in the papers, and before night Dave Walker, one of Pinkerton's men, was on hand to investigate the affair. I knew Dave was a good man, but an ambitious one, who liked to take all the credit of a success upon himself, while he was equally ready to place all the blame of failure on his associates.

I told Dave the story related by Mabel and Young Forrest, whose real name was Harrison.

Dave expressed no opinion, but looked wise, and all day he prowled about the grounds.

Just at night he came to me with an expression of intense satisfaction on his face.

"What's up, Dave?" I asked.

"I know who killed Pryor!" he said, confidently.

"The deuce you do!" I exclaimed, springing up.

"Yes, I do. And I'll tell you all about it. To-day I found in the grass, near the rear wall of the grounds, an air-gun with the name of James Harrison, the real name of Dudley Forrest, engraved on it, and also the stamp of the shop where it was sold in the town below here. I saw the man who sold the gun, and he described the purchaser, so that I am quite sure he was Harrison; but the name of James Harrison was not on the gun when it was sold. Now, I think I understand the case in full. Harrison, when he revealed himself to his lady-love's uncle, found Mr. Pryor enraged at the deception practiced upon him, and, instead of giving his consent to Harrison's marriage to his niece, he refused to give his consent. Then it may be presumed that hot words were exchanged, and, in the heat and excitement, Harrison shot Pryor with the air-gun.

"I have interviewed Miss Mabel, and she says she did not see her uncle fall, and only rushed out when, upon looking from the window at which she had been watching, but from which she had turned away for a moment, she saw her uncle lying on the ground.

"I shall have to arrest Mr. Harrison," said Walker in conclusion.

Walker carried out his intention, and arrested Harrison and took him to prison.

Mabel was in despair, but my faith in her affianced served to reassure her in some degree.

I then set to work, and Mr. Randolph Morton, whom Mabel suspected, became the object of my surveillance.

I followed him, and together with some of the most expert detectives, male and female, strove in every way to decide beyond question whether or not he was guilty; but time went rapidly by, and we failed to in any way connect Morton with the crime.

Harrison was placed on trial, and although the evidence was purely circumstantial, the fact of the weapon with which Pryor was slain bearing his name, that he was alone with the murdered man when he was shot, and that the man who sold the air-gun thought that he was the purchaser, though he could not positively swear to him, coupled with the fact that Harrison had assumed another name to win Pryor's confidence and friendship, and also that the victim had been opposed to the accused's marriage with Mabel, all told terribly against him; and he was convicted of murder in the second degree, and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

In the course of my investigations relating to Randolph Morton, I had acquired the knowledge of the fact that he was secretly connected with a gang of criminals in New York, who were engaged in the counterfeiting business, and I had six months later the pleasure of locating their workshop in an underground den in the city of New York.

The week preceding this discovery, the public was surprised to learn through the medium of the daily papers that James Harrison, convicted of the murder of Alexander Pryor, had made his escape from prison, leaving no clue by which he could be traced.

When I read this news, I remembered the vow he had made in open court, and in my heart I sincerely hoped he would not be recaptured.

The day I located the den of the gang I have mentioned I ventured there in disguise, representing myself to be a party whom I had that very day myself secretly arrested.

I was received as one of the gang, and all went well until Randolph Morton entered the den, and then my voice betrayed me.

In an instant I was seized, bound, and placed in a large sack and hurled through a concealed opening in the floor that connected with the sewers.

The fall did not seriously injure me, and I managed to get one hand free and loosen the sack.

This done, I was soon out of it.

The walls of the sewer were irregular, and silently climbing up, I listened at the concealed trap.

All was silent.

Not a sound reached my ears.

I pushed upon the sliding door in the floor above my head.

It moved.

Soon I could look into the room above, and I saw there was but one of the gang present, and he was a powerfully-built fellow, with a bearded face and tangled hair, who stood on guard at the door.

His back was toward me.

Silently I pulled the slide still further open, and crept up into the room above.

If I could pass the solitary guard at the street door I could escape.

I meant to surprise and overpower him.

I had been disarmed by my captors before I was hurled down into the sewer.

Glancing about for some weapon, my eyes fell upon a knotted club standing in the corner.

Stealthily, holding my very breath, and fearing that the creaking of the floor might betray me, I crossed to the bludgeon and secured it.

The man on guard had not stirred.

He seemed like one lost in thought.

I crept upon him.

I raised the heavy club, and was about to bring it down on his head, when he turned like a flash, dodged my blow, and seized me by the throat, at the same time he hissed:

"How have I betrayed myself?"

Although the disguise I had worn when I ventured into the den had been torn off when I was thrown into the sewer, my face had become coated with mud, and my own mother would not have known me.

The club dropped from my hand, and then a desperate deadly struggle began.

The iron grip on my throat tightened, and I could not shake it off, but if I did not I was doomed.

I made one last terrible effort, and broke away, at the same time making a clutch at the throat of my foe, who had instantly drawn a knife.

At that thrilling moment the bushy beard of my antagonist came off in my hand, and the face of James Harrison, the escaped convict, was revealed.

But his knife was falling.

I leaped back as I exclaimed:

"I am Waters, the detective!"

He knew my voice, and dropped the knife, and together we fled from the place.

Then he explained that after his escape he had assumed his disguise and joined this gang, because he found out Morton belonged to it. He further said that he had found the man who engraved his name on the air-gun, and that the engraver in question would swear that Morton paid him to do the job; and more, on the night of Pryor's murder, an old vagabond who was asleep under the wall, saw Morton leave the grounds at about the time Pryor was shot. Further still, since he had become a member of the gang, he had heard from the assassin's lips a confession of the crime made in a moment of drunken confidence.

Next day we arrested Morton.

The wretch was convicted, and Harrison was abandoned and saved from the consequences of Morton's "awful plot" to brand him as a murderer.

Of course, Mabel soon became Harrison's bride.

SPEED BOAT SPEEDS AT 68 MILES AN HOUR

Caleb Bragg's new speed boat, Rascal, in a trial on Manhasset Bay recently turned up a speed of 68 statute miles an hour. The Rascal was entered in the Dodge Memorial Trophy race, which was run during the Gold Cup Regatta on Aug. 21 and 22.

CURRENT NEWS

BATHERS FEAR ALLIGATOR

Bathers at Matawan Creek, Matawan, N. J., are alarmed by the report that a large size alligator had been swimming in the waters.

ASK GAS MASKS AS CESSPOOL FUMES KILL THREE PERSONS

Demand for gas masks has been made by laborers forced to work in sewers, following the death of three persons by gas fumes in a cesspool at 65 Bell Ave., Bayside, Queens, N. Y. Two others were overcome.

The dead are John Ferderowitch, stonemason, 27 Prince St.; Stephen Sepegere, 64 Prince Ct., Bayside, and Fireman Charles Nagle, Corona, who attempted to rescue them.

Lowering themselves into the cesspool to repair masonry, Ferderowitch and Sepegere collapsed before they detected the presence of gas. Nagle, first of the firemen to enter the hole, suffered a like fate.

APPLES CAPTURE "WILD" ELEPHANTS

An aged Indian woman, with offerings of apples, captured three elephants of five which escaped from a circus at Oranbrook, B. C., several days ago and have been sought ever since.

After being loaded on freight cars, however, one of the animals bolted and broke away. It was roaming the forest to-day together with the two others of the five still at liberty.

Sighting the elephants, the Indian woman approached and fed them apples. Other Indians brought more apples. One of the elephants was hobbled while it was being fed. The fettered animal was brought here while the two others voluntarily followed.

CANNED MUSIC CANS THE PIANO

"The new young woman is beyond me," said the Westerner who had returned to New York for a visit to his boyhood home.

"I have a sister, Margaret, who was born with a decided talent for music. When she was fifteen the family felt sure that she was another Mme. Rive-King. Our mother consulted with some friends and it was decided to send Margaret to a conservatory for study. Well, she went, and for seven years was taught by the best instructors of the city.

"Could she play the piano at the end of that time? You should have heard her. We were certain she had them all backed off the the musical board. About that time I drifted west and remained for twelve years. In those years sister Margaret got married and went to housekeeping. She had grown quite matronly when I returned a few days ago and went to visit her in the Heights section of Brooklyn.

"The first thing I noticed when I got into the house was that there was no piano in the front room. 'How about your piano, Margaret?' was the first thing I said.

"I got tired of the old thing long ago," she replied, "and so we got a radio outfit and found it much more agreeable."

"Naturally, I dropped the subject."

AT 66, CALIFORNIA'S "SINGING MERMAID" HOPES TO OUTDO EDERLE'S CHANNEL SWIM

Gertrude Ederle, conqueror of the English Channel, will have to look to her laurels.

And the challenge is one of age to youth.

Southern California's sixty-six-year-old "singing mermaid," Mrs. Anna Van Skike, completed a ten-mile birthday swim recently and now is ready to out-do Miss Ederle's feat.

As she stepped from the water, after singing a stanza of the Star Spangled Banner at the half way point in her swim, Mrs. Van Skike expressed the belief that she could swim from Long Beach to Catalina Island, a distance of twenty-three miles, in the time Miss Ederle swam the Channel.

"I believe the swim between Catalina and Long Beach would be as difficult as the Channel. Currents and the 'dead pull' would make the swim a hard one and the water would be as cold," Mrs. Van Skike declared.

"I believe I could make as good a showing as any of the young ones," she added. "I feel fine to-night, but believe that it will be best to wait a few days before making any definite announcement."

Mrs. Van Skike is a former grand opera singer and her favorite pastime is to float about on the blue Pacific and sing melodies of past triumphs.

For the last six years she has celebrated her birthday by swimming from Venice to Santa Monica Canyon and back.

THE SQUIRREL AND THE HUNTER

A hunter sees a squirrel in a tree and in trying to get a shot at it walks completely around the tree. But the canny squirrel moves so that the tree is always between himself and the hunter—in other words, the squirrel also goes around the tree on the opposite side from the hunter. Now did or did not the hunter go around the squirrel?

There has been more breath wasted on this problem than one likes to think about. It all depends on what you mean by 'around.' Here is the opinion of Mr. H. E. Dudney, a noted English mathematician, which we think should be taken as final:

The man unequivocally goes around the squirrel, using the words in their ordinary and correct meaning. The Standard Dictionary definition of "around" is "about the place or position of; entirely encircle." Now no matter what movements the squirrel may or may not have made, the hunter entirely encircled the tree on which the squirrel was, and so encircled, or "went around" the squirrel itself. Dudeny's opponent in the argument said that to go around meant to see all sides of an object. Dudeny replied that then a blind man couldn't go around anything. The arguer replied that he meant that if given sight a man could see all sides. Dudeny retorted that in that case he couldn't go around a man in a box!

There is no doubt about it; the hunter does go around he squirrel.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

THE ELECTRIC CLOCK

Plug your clock in on the same electric current that supplies the electric lights—and you have a time-piece that never needs to be wound, and one that is bound to be accurate every second of the day. Such is the "telechron," a new invention by which the alternating current from the power house can run the family clock.

The telechron contains a diminutive synchronous motor containing a rotor the size of a ten-cent piece. This rotor floats in oil, and makes exactly 3,000 revolutions a minute when it is attached to a 60-cycle alternating current. Through suitable gearing this is reduced to one revolution per hour for the minute hand, to one revolution a day for the hour hand. The amount of current required to run the motor is said to be very small.

The feature of the clock is its accuracy. It is bound to be exactly on time, for the rotation of the hands is governed by the alternating current, which completes exactly 60 cycles a second. This, in turn, is always carefully watched by the power house furnishing the current, as the alternating current supplying the lights must be uniform. The power houses usually check up at least twice a day on the official time from Washington.

The clock of course needs no winding, and is said to require no regulating, no cleaning, and no oiling. It is noiseless. If by chance the electric power becomes disconnected from the clock, a red signal flashes on in the face.

HINTS ON THE CARE OF CAR AND MOTOR

When relining the brakes, form the band to the drum after the new lining is riveted on. Then install and it will be found that the brakes are easily adjusted.

The most common cause of body noises is the windshield.

Valve Adjustment

To eliminate valve noise, do not set the valve clearance closer than is specified by the factory. Too close an adjustment will burn the valve seats, cause a loss of power and create noise.

Seventy per cent. of ignition grief is caused by neglect.

Help Keep the Highway Clean

Much needless damage to tires will be avoided if drivers of cars which are involved in collisions causing falling glass from headlights will trouble themselves to remove the glass from the highways before traffic spreads it over the road.

Do not attempt to adjust a carburetor without the proper gap in the spark plug.

Test Balloon Tires Carefully

Because balloon tires are extremely sensitive to pressures, it is advisable to make more than one test with the gauge. Test several times and take the average. Start with just a little more air

than is needed, because in testing some air is allowed to escape.

The clips holding the headlight fuses should always have tension enough to hold the fuses firmly and make the proper contact.

OFFERS \$500 FOR A NAME

The most important contribution ever made towards the perfection and development of metallic ammunition became known when the Remington Arms Company requested patent rights on a formula for a priming mixture that eliminates rust, corrosion and barrel pitting.

Remington asserts that when cartridges containing this new priming mixture are used exclusively, it is not necessary to clean the inside of the rifle barrel. It makes an ordinary rifle barrel rust proof and stainless. The use of cartridges primed with this mixture will prolong barrel life indefinitely. In the perfection of metallic ammunition this is the final word.

As the above paragraph indicates the new priming mixture does not require the use of a special steel barrel—The exclusive use of cartridges containing this priming mixture makes the inside of any rifle barrel rustless, stainless, and corrosion proof.

The Remington laboratories have for several years been experimenting with the new mixture and in the course of experimental work millions of .22 calibre cartridges have been fired to perfect it. Barrels through which thousands of .22 calibre cartridges containing the new priming mixture were fired, show not the slightest signs of erosion, corrosion, rusting or pitting. Similar barrels in which several thousand cartridges were fired with ordinary ammunition of every manufacture were badly eroded, corroded, rusted and pitted.

Before putting the cartridges containing the new priming mixture on the market Remington desires a name for the ammunition containing this new mixture, and announces that it will give \$500. for the five best names submitted. For the best name \$250. will be awarded; for the second best name \$100., for the third best name \$75., for the fourth best \$50. and for the fifth \$25.

All names must be submitted to the Remington Arms Company, 25 Broadway, New York, not later than 5 P. M. on September 26, and no letter should contain more than 50 words. If two or more persons submit the same prize winning names the prize tied for will be awarded to all contestants who tie. All names submitted will become the property of the Remington Arms Company. No employee of this company is eligible to compete. Winners will be announced and the prizes awarded by October 15th.

The judges who will go over the names and select the prize winners are Ray P. Holland, Editor of Field & Stream, Frederick C. Kendall, Editor Advertising and Selling Fortnightly; and Robert K. Leavitt, Secretary of the Association of National Advertisers.

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